

ARTISTS *and*  
SIGNATURES  
*in* ANCIENT  
GREECE



Jeffrey M. Hurwit

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## ARTISTS AND SIGNATURES IN ANCIENT GREECE

The Greeks inscribed their works of art and craft with labels identifying mythological or historical figures, bits of poetry, and claims of ownership. But no type of inscription is more hotly debated or more intriguing than the artist's signature, which raises questions concerning the role and status of the artist and the work of art or craft itself. In this book, Jeffrey M. Hurwit surveys the phenomenon of artists' signatures across the many genres of Greek art from the eighth to the first century BCE. Although the great majority of extant works lack signatures, the Greek artist nonetheless signed his products far more often than any other artist of antiquity. Examining signatures on gems, coins, mosaics, wall-paintings, metalwork, vases, and sculptures, Hurwit argues that signatures help us assess the position of the Greek artist within his society as well as his conception of his own skill and originality.

Jeffrey M. Hurwit is Philip H. Knight Professor of Art History and Classics at the University of Oregon, where he has taught since 1980. He is the author of *The Acropolis in the Age of Pericles* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), *The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), and *The Art and Culture of Early Greece, 1100–480 BC* (1985), as well as many articles on ancient Greek art. He has taught in Siena, Italy, and Athens, Greece, and has lectured widely across the United States and Europe. He was Martha S. Joukowsky Lecturer for the Archaeological Institute of America in 2000–01 and a Guggenheim Fellow in 1987–88.





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JEFFREY M. HURWIT

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**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107105713](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107105713)

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First published 2015

Printed in the United States of America

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

Hurwit, Jeffrey M., 1949–

Artists and signatures in ancient Greece / Jeffrey M. Hurwit, University of Oregon.  
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-10571-3

1. Artists – Greece – Social conditions. 2. Artists – Greece – Autographs. I. Title.

N5633.H87 2015

700.938-dc23 2015002309

ISBN 978-1-107-10571-3 Hardback

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*For Kris*

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## PREFACE

ANCIENT GREEKS LIKED TO WRITE THINGS ON THEIR WORKS OF ART AND CRAFT, and they wrote on virtually every kind of object and on nearly every kind of surface. They inscribed stone statues and bronze statues and their stone bases. They inscribed stone reliefs and stelai and marble tiles and marble discs. They engraved words on gems and the dies of coins. They inscribed chests of cedar inlaid with myth in ivory and gold. They inscribed stone city walls and the stone walls of temples and treasuries, and they labeled the sections of stone theaters; they even inscribed large rocks. They labeled painted figures on the plastered walls of temples and colonnades. They wrote on large painted wooden panels hung on the walls of clubhouses and banquet halls. They painted words on wooden and terracotta plaques, large and small, and they stamped words upon terracotta tiles and antefixes and amphora handles. They made words out of pebbles or small stone cubes on mosaic floors. They molded words upon terracotta figurines and relief vases and lamps and glassware. They inscribed bronze vessels and gold vessels and silver vessels. They inscribed bronze figurines and bronze knucklebones (*astragaloî*) and bronze helmets and shield bands and spears (both butts and points) and heralds' staffs and tablets and plaques and disks. They inscribed bronze jurors' tickets and bronze weights and lead weights and lead tablets and iron mirrors. They wove words into cloth. And they painted words on vases.

No Greek liked to write more than the Athenian, and it is on the Athenian vase that we find the richest and most varied corpus of inscriptions in ancient art. There are, most often, simple labels identifying mythological figures engaged in heroic or divine action (Herakles, Theseus, Achilles, Athena, and so on). The impulse to name names can be so strong that on one famously text-rich vase the labels "Poseidon" and "Amphitrite" are there, even though Poseidon and Amphitrite themselves are not. Sometimes there are labels identifying historical figures (the poet Anakreon, for example, or Alkaios and Sappho, though their "portraits" are only imagined). There are labels identifying dogs, horses, and asses. There are even labels identifying inanimate objects and places (a water-jar, a fountain-house, a lyre, Mt. Helikon). There are legends identifying the origin and purpose of the vase itself: for hundreds of years the phrase *From the Games at Athens* was written vertically beside an image of

Athena on amphoras awarded, full of olive oil, to victors at the Panathenaic festival; *Public Property* could be written on vases that served as official liquid measures; and the names of Athenian tribes could be written on pots that served as water clocks. There are, rarely, titles or captions: a series of heroic contests on one vase (just part of a chariot race survives) is, we are told, *The Games for Patroklos*. That, at least, is informative: the comments *He enjoys it*, written beside a masturbating satyr labeled Wanker, and *He is going to jump*, in a generic scene of an athlete preparing to jump, are merely superfluous. There are, not infrequently, bits of poetry or attempts at poetry (an erotic epigram involving Helios and a beautiful boy, for example, or the seriously muddled hexameter *Speak to me, Muse, about the fine flowing Skamander I begin to sing* that a schoolboy has evidently written on a scroll that his teacher holds up to him, pointing out his mistakes). There are neatly written dedications to gods (such as Apollo), and, occasionally, there are statements of ownership (*Asopodoros' oil-flask*, reads one), sometimes inscribed upon the vase after firing. On hundreds of vases produced in the last decades of the sixth century and the first decades of the fifth, inscriptions declare that a particular boy is handsome and, far less often, that an unidentified girl is beautiful. Along the same lines, one cup addresses itself *To the fairest of maidens*. There are strings of letters (or even partially formed letters) that mean nothing at all – nonsense inscriptions that only emulate words and that fill the spaces between figures, binding them together, with a visual and decorative rather than a linguistic value (such nonsense can be written even by literate painters). Sometimes the figures themselves speak to other figures in the scene, as if the words were issuing from their mouths (all that is missing is the kind of speech bubble we find in our comics and cartoons): Ajax and Achilles playing a board game at Troy call out their scores, *three* and *four*; Odysseus, bound to the mast, yells in vain *Free me!* to his crew so he can follow the Sirens' enchanting but lethal song; a symposiast, with a flute-player beside him, throws his head back (as symposiasts are wont to do) and protests *I cannot, I cannot* [sing, presumably], which recalls the start of some lines assigned to the poet Theognis but just might be the kind of conventional posturing typical of drinking parties; five small O's – raw vocalizations, not poetry – bubble up from Alkaios' open mouth as Sappho looks on; Herakles, upon entering Olympos, addresses the king of the gods with *Dear Zeus . . .*; on another vase the great god is beseeched again when a musician walking with his dog sings (in one reading) *O father Zeus, keep me out of poverty*. A courtesan calls out to a handsome youth (depicted elsewhere on the same pot) *This one's for you, beautiful Euthymides!*; on the interior of a wine-cup a man stiffly penetrating a woman from behind tells her (in the most popular interpretation) to *Hold still*. Or figures speak to no one in particular: a symposiast longingly calls out *O most beautiful of boys* as he strokes a hare, a love-gift for the unidentified, absent lad; a rhapsode sings the opening of

an epic poem (*Thus, once, in Tiryns . . .*) to an audience that is not there – or, fictively, to actual symposiasts who once were there and who, having used and read the vase, were prompted to take up the song themselves. Very rarely, there is even a conversation (Youth: *Look, a swallow!* Man: *Yes, by Herakles!* Boy: *There it is!* Caption: *Spring is already here.*). Sometimes the vases speak for themselves in the first person – “egocentric” vases, they have been called, without prejudice – as if they were conscious or self-aware and *could* speak, directly addressing us: *He who now of all the dancers dances best shall have me*, announces an early wine-jug given as a prize; *I am a good cup*, insists one cup; *I am the cup of Korakos*, says another; *I am Pheidias*,’ says yet another; *Two obols: keep your hands off*, warns a price-conscious amphora; *I open my mouth wide*, says an open-mouthed wine-cooler; *I greet you*, say some perfume bottles; *greetings and drink well*, say some drinking cups, even more convivially. Sometimes the vase-painter himself addresses his own creations: one writes *Well done!* next to a figure of Theseus outwrestling an opponent; another calls out *Greetings!* to figures of Apollo and Artemis; and another way of reading the inscription on the “Hold Still” cup is that it is the vase-painter who is telling the man to *Stay Calm*. And sometimes the potter and the vase-painter – like the sculptor, panel-painter, mosaicist, gem-engraver, die-cutter, bronze worker, coroplast, mason, and builder – speak to us, through their egocentric works, with declarations of agency: *Kleimakhos made me, and I am his*; or *Euxitheos made me*; or *Euphronios painted me*. And it is that last kind of text that will concern us here.

This book broadly surveys and describes a phenomenon – the art of signing, the inscription of identity – that cuts across the principal genres of ancient Greek art. It does not catalogue every extant Greek artist’s signature, nor does it definitively answer every question that the practice raises. We must acknowledge at the outset that not every such question *can* be answered, at least not with the evidence available to us, and we should not pretend otherwise. Fundamentally, of course, a signature simply says “X made this”: it is a text displayed by an object naming the person who created it. It is also implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) an expression of pride in one’s work, and it is thus a way of distinguishing oneself from one’s rivals in skillful artistic production and from one’s competitors in the marketplace. Still, it is not clear why Greek signatures first appear in some genres (gem-engraving, for example) later than others (vase-painting, for example, or sculpture). It is not clear why a given vase-painter will sign some works but not others, or why some very fine vase-painters never sign at all (while some very bad ones do). It is not entirely clear why a few cities (most notably in south Italy and Sicily) allowed or encouraged signatures on their coinage, but the vast majority of cities did not. The peculiarly and pervasively agonistic culture of the Greeks may be part of the explanation – signatures function in rivalries between artists – but it can only be a part of it, for it only raises another question: just what was it about

the Greeks that made them so competitive, anyway? But if we usually cannot fathom the intentions or psyches of ancient artists, and if we must repeatedly concede in the pages that follow that most works of Greek art in all genres are unsigned, the practice of signing itself nonetheless sets the Greeks apart from the other peoples of the ancient world. It also offers some insight into Greek conceptions of art, the artist, and artistic originality, and for that reason alone the phenomenon merits our attention.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE ORIGINS OF THIS BOOK LIE IN AN ESSAY I WAS ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE TO Kristen Seaman's and Peter Schultz's volume *Artists and Artistic Production in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, forthcoming), and some of the material in that essay appears reworked here, especially in [Chapters One](#) and [Two](#). I thank Kristen and Peter very much for their original invitation and their continued enthusiasm.

I owe a debt of gratitude to many others as well – some who have heard me speak on the topic of Greek artists' signatures and posed perceptive questions or offered comments that got me thinking again (Catherine Keesling, Günter Kopcke, Carol Lawton, Clemente Marconi); some who have helped me in variously important ways (Judy Barringer, Larissa Bonfante, François de Callataÿ, John R. Clarke, Adriana Emiliozzi, Kristen Hurwit, Christopher Lightfoot, Claire Lyons, Joan Mertens, Rainer Vollkommer); and some who have read all or parts of the book in an earlier form and again offered valuable critiques and suggestions (these include Carmen Arnold-Biucchi, who patiently instructed me in the ways of numismatics, and several anonymous readers for the Press). I also thank many others who supplied or helped me acquire images and the rights to publish them: Lynda Clark and Emma Darbyshire (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), François de Callataÿ (Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels), Sheila Dillon (Duke University), Sylvie Dumont (Agora Excavations), Marya Fisher, Fourcroy Florence (Boulogne-sur-Mer), Marta Fodor (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), Lynn-Marie Kara, Dimitrios Pantermalis (President, Acropolis Museum), Kalliope Papangele (3rd Ephoreia, Athens), Claudio Parisi Presicce and Angela Carbonaro (Musei Capitolini, Rome), Michael Slade (Art Resource, New York), Elizabeth Spencer (Toledo Museum of Art), Amy Taylor (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), Ioulia Tzonou-Herbst (Corinth Excavations), and Greet Van Deuren (Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels).

Special debts are owed to two superlative scholars and friends. One is Jasper Gaunt, who carefully read an early draft, corrected me when I needed it, and offered many important suggestions that I hope have made the book stronger than it was when last he saw it. The second is the generous and talented Hans

Rupprecht Goette, who made my life so much easier by kindly supplying many splendid images that grace the pages of this book. Finally, I thank Asya Graf of Cambridge University Press for her constant support and guidance.

I am most grateful to all, and I have only myself to blame for mistakes that remain.



## A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations for scholarly journals and standard reference works are the ones in general use listed in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 111 (2007), 14–34 (see also [www.ajaonline.org](http://www.ajaonline.org)). To that list, add CEG (for P. A. Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca saeculorum VIII-V a. Chr. n.* Berlin. 1983).



## A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSLITERATIONS

Unless otherwise noted, translations are mine. As for transliterations, I have generally favored the Greek form of a name over the Latinized or Anglicized form (so, *Herakles* instead of *Heracles*), but I have not always done so (preferring the more familiar *Athens* over *Athēnai*, for example, and *Corinth* over *Korinthos*). I have tried to be consistent, but Greek, English, and common practice being the way they are, some inconsistencies are unavoidable. So, for example, the Greek letter χ is usually rendered here as *kh*, as in *Nearkhos*, but sometimes as *ch*, as in *Chios* or *Achilles*.



## ARTISTS AND SIGNATURES IN ANCIENT GREECE





I. Base for a kouros made and dedicated by Euthykartides of Naxos, c. 625. Delos Museum A 728. Photo: author.



II. Krater made and signed by Aristonothos, from Caere; c. 650 BCE. Collezione Castellani CA 172. Courtesy Musei Capitolini, Rome.



III. The *Hercules Farnese*, signed by Glykon of Athens (after original by Lysippos). Early 3rd c. CE. Naples, Archaeological Museum 6001. Photo: author.





IV. *Emblema* from Pompeii, signed by Dioskourides of Samos, c. 100 BCE. Naples, Archaeological Museum 9987. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.



V. Chalcedony gem made for Mika and signed by Dexamenos, c. 440–430 BCE. © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge B.34 (CG 53).

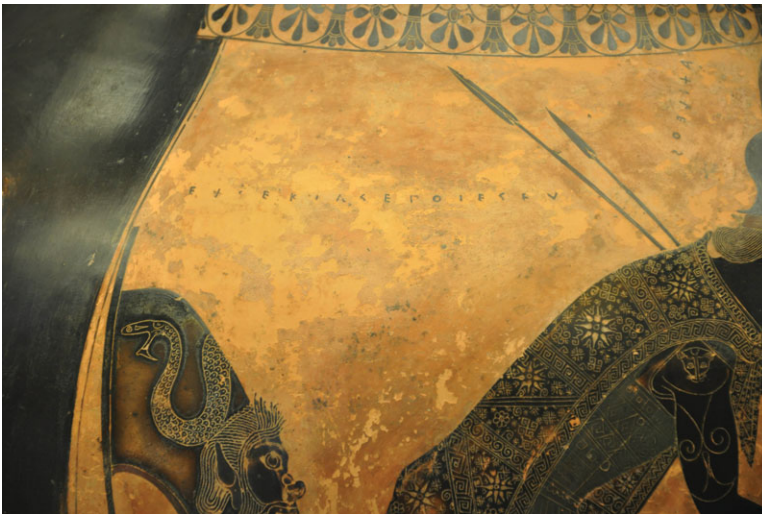


VI. Syracusan tetradrachm signed on helmet of Athena by Eukleidas, c. 410–405 BCE. Courtesy Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Coll. A. du Chastel 111.





VII. Fragment of a polychrome krater from Naxos, with painter's signature (the name is lost); c. 650 BCE. Naxos Archaeological Museum. Photo: author.



VIII. Signature of Exekias on Attic Black Figure amphora (Type A), c. 540–530 BCE. Vatican 344. Photo: author.



IX. Attic Red Figure stamnos signed by Smikros; c. 510–500 BCE. Brussels, Musée Royaux A 717. © RMAH, Brussels.



X. Inscribed base of kore dedicated by Nearkhos on Acropolis, signed by Antenor; c. 520–510. Acropolis Museum 681. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.



XI. Fragmentary shield band signed by Aristodamos of Argos, c. 580 BCE. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection (84.AC.11), Malibu.





XII. Base of lost portrait statues of Spoudias and Kleiokrateia, signed by . . . ysikles and Praxiteles, before 361 BCE. Agora Museum I 4165. Photo: author.



XIII. Statue and base of Athena dedicated by Angelitos, signed by Euenor; c. 470 BCE. Acropolis Museum 140. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.



XIV. Inscribed base of the marble Nike dedicated by the Messenians and Naupactians just after 425 BCE, signed by Paionios of Mende. Olympia Museum 46–8. Photo: author.



XV. Detail of southwest wing of the Pergamon Altar (c. 180–160 BCE), with signature of Theorrhetos on upper molding. Berlin. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.

PART ONE

ON THE STATUS, ORIGINALITY, AND  
DIFFERENCE OF THE GREEK ARTIST



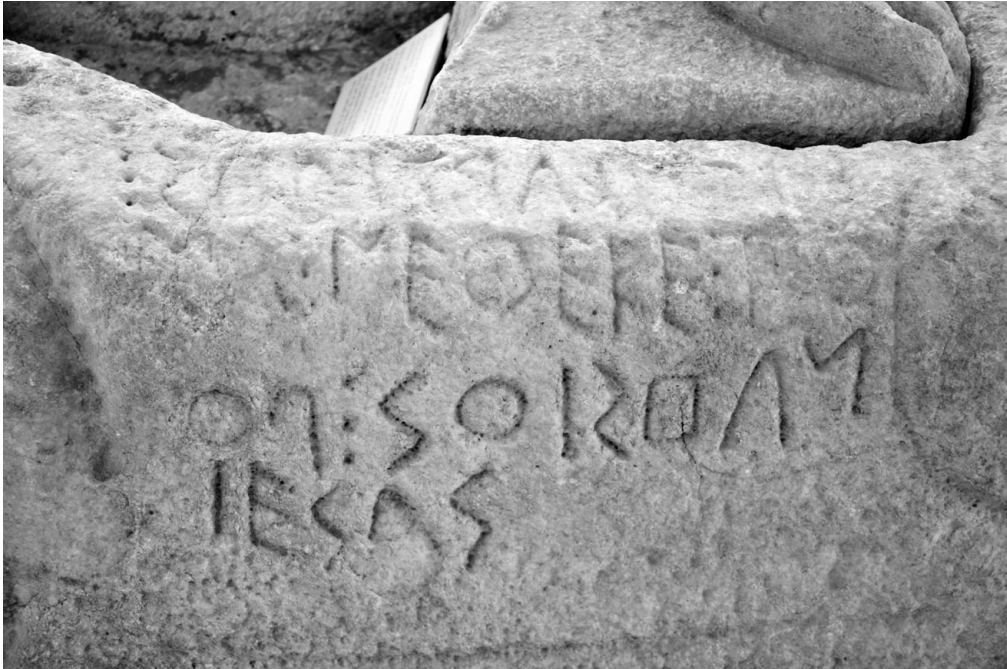


## CHAPTER ONE

## EUTHYKARTIDES' TOES: SIGNATURES AND THE STATUS OF THE GREEK ARTIST

IT WAS ONLY ONE, AT MOST TWO, GENERATIONS AFTER THE INVENTION OF the type that a sculptor from the island of Naxos carved an over-life-size *kouros*\* out of a block of Naxian marble and dedicated it in the *temenos*\* (sacred precinct) of Apollo on Delos [Pl. I].<sup>1</sup> At least, we think the statue was a *kouros*: there is even less of it preserved now than there was when it was found in 1885 – just part of the left foot, merely the tips of a couple of toes on the right<sup>2</sup> – and so there is a small possibility that the statue was an offering-bearer who just stood like a *kouros*, upright, left leg advanced, like the later Kriophoros (Ram-Bearer) from Thasos or the Moschophoros (Calf-Bearer) from the Athenian Acropolis.<sup>3</sup> In any case, its hexagonal plinth was set into a roughly worked, roughly triangular marble boulder (adorned at the corners with the heads of a ram, a lion, and a gorgon) so that the statue stood at a slight angle upon it.<sup>4</sup> That is, whoever stood directly before the ram-headed corner of the base – the presumed “front” of the ensemble – would have seen the statue in a three-quarter view: the *kouros* would have turned a bit to the spectator’s left, so that its Apolline stride would have been clear. But the view of the monument opened up still more, since the spectator was encouraged to attend to the side of the base between the ram and the lion by an inscription that begins on the flat top of the base and continues, *boustrophedon*,\* down that side [Fig. 1]:

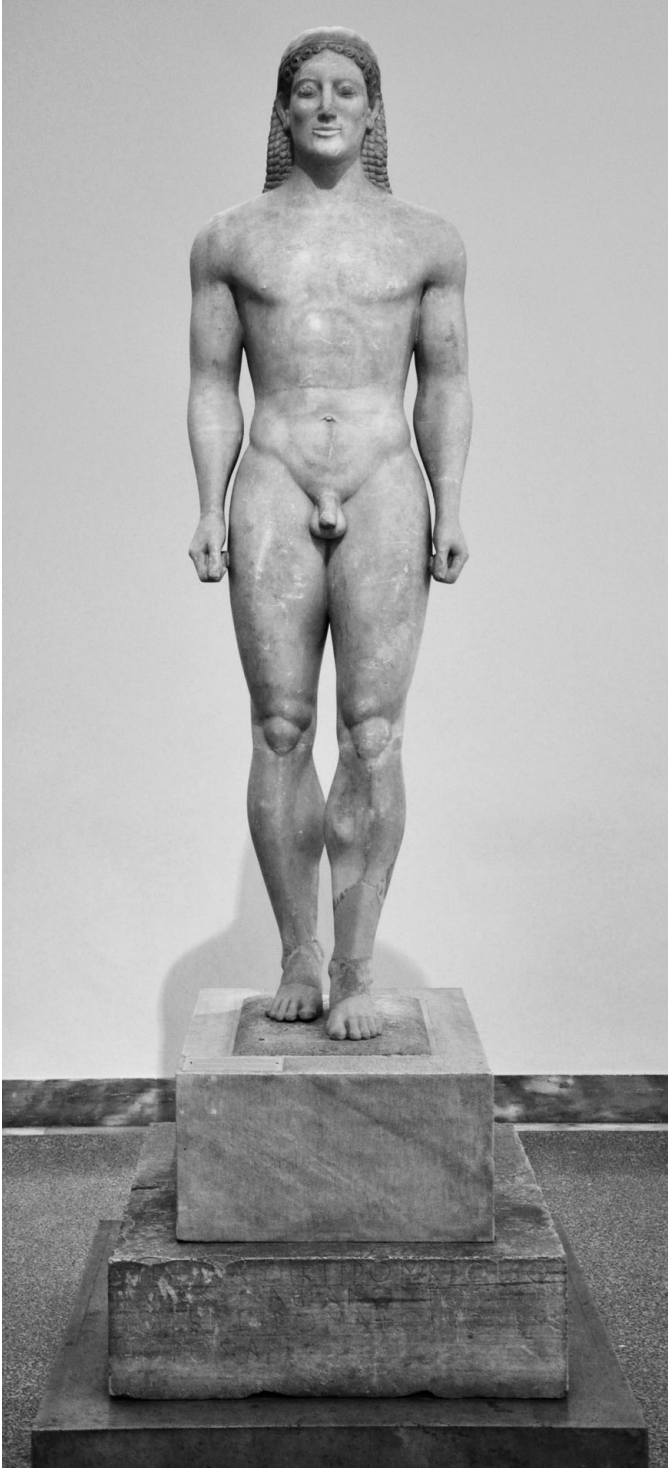
EUTHYKARTIDĒS MANETHEKE HO NAHSIOS POIESAS  
*Euthykartides the Naxian dedicated me, having made [me].*



1. Detail of the base of Euthykartides' kouros (Delos A 728), with inscribed dedication and signature. Photo: author.

The only things we know about Euthykartides are what the toes, the base, and its inscription – probably the earliest Greek sculptor's *signature*,\* certainly the earliest complete one<sup>5</sup> – tell us. The man was from Naxos; he dedicated (the word is *anetheke*\*) a statue that he himself carved in a sanctuary that (largely because of Naxian investment) was fast becoming one of the most important in Greece; he departed from a strict frontality that might have been expected of a statue this early and so encouraged the spectator to view it from more than one point of view; and he worked within a monumental stone sculptural tradition that was in the last quarter of the seventh century still new.

This much about Euthykartides we know. But, given his absence from our ancient literary sources (Pliny, Pausanias, and so on) and the absence of any other work attributable to him, his “artistic personality” is irretrievably lost.<sup>6</sup> Euthykartides thus occupies a familiar position held by most of the Greek artists whose names we happen to know. He was not on present evidence (and, again, that amounts to only a few human toes and a three-headed base) an “individual artistic genius” who used his sculptures self-consciously to “express himself” or his “inner vision” or his “originality.” And his statue was probably completely conventional, even if the convention itself was in its infancy: it stood like all kouroi had stood and would always stand [cf. Fig. 2], until the death of the type a century and a half later. But neither was his



2. The Anavyssos Kouros, marker of the grave of Kroisos; c. 530. Athens, National Museum 3851. Photo: author.

statue “an anonymous product of an impersonal craft” – a famously absolutist characterization of Greek sculpture that has been adopted and promoted by some who wish to overthrow the idea of the individual creative artist as the principal generator of artistic change and who wish to banish the concepts of “genius” or “personality” or “originality” from art historical discourse.<sup>7</sup> The idea that art mechanically runs its course apart from the minds and intentions of artists (even if we cannot always discern what artistic intention is), the idea that the course of Greek art was propelled solely by impersonal social or historical forces acting upon passive, interchangeable automatons who were at best menial laborers, “rude mechanicals,” or *banausoi*\* – these are arid, “posthumanist” ideas that an examination of Greek artists’ signatures calls into question. They are refuted as well by emulating Dr. Johnson and kicking such rocks as Polygnotos, Polykleitos, Praxiteles, Apelles, Skopas, and Lysippos down the street: these names belonged to demonstrably innovative and influential artists who did not merely reflect or “channel” their culture but generated it, sending Greek art on new and original trajectories. Now, we should not heroize or deify the Greek artist (we should not heroize the art historian or cultural critic, either, by the way). And we should not deny the immense power that society and audience exert over the artist: he, too, is a cultural product. But the many academically trendy, Barthesian reports of the “death of the artist (or author)” have been greatly exaggerated.<sup>8</sup> So let us just stipulate that artists shape culture and culture shapes them, and move on.

Although the kouros type was canonical and eminently reproducible, the genre clearly did not have the power to stifle Euthykartides’ impulse to declare, with his signature, his own identity. These little bits of sculpture [Pl. I] are not anonymous – if a signature is anything at all, it is an overt rejection of namelessness – and for Euthykartides the original dedication was very personal indeed. This is so because we can plausibly infer a few other things about the man and his dedication. That the monument was a votive meant primarily to adorn the burgeoning precinct of Apollo – that it was an *agalma*\*, a monument of devotion to delight the god – is clear enough: there is no reason to doubt Euthykartides’ religious sincerity. But the god was hardly the statue’s only intended audience. Any dedication is itself an entry into “a competition of votives,” and the *temenos* was its arena. And so the inscription must also have been a kind of claim or advertisement meant to inform and impress priests and pilgrims and thus speak to potential clients: “this is what you can expect from Euthykartides.” The work is certainly not about self-expression. But it is about self-promotion; it is about mastery of material and form; and it is also about Euthykartides’ rivalry both with other sculptors for commissions and with other dedicants for the favor of Apollo. It may also be that Euthykartides dedicated and prominently signed this work precisely “because he was so proud to be a sculptor,”<sup>9</sup> and perhaps the relatively large size of the letters is a

symptom of that pride, as well as of his pride in being able to write at a time when literacy was probably not yet widespread or deep. His piety (and self-interest) provided the impetus to display his *tekhnē*\* – his craft, his mastery of skillful production. Reciprocally, his *tekhnē* allowed him to display his piety and win prestige. His literacy allowed him to declare his identity and purpose. And his apparent wealth made all of that possible. For the fact that he (1) could afford the marble in the first place, (2) had the time (a year? more?) to rough out a large-scale statue and a separate, heavy base in a Naxian quarry and then finish the ensemble in his workshop, then (3) could hire a ship and crew to transport the monument to Delos some 30 kilometers away, and then, finally, (4) could dedicate it to Apollo in his own name (presumably having negotiated with the Delian priesthood for a nice spot within the god's precinct, that arena of votives) – all of this indicates that Euthykartides was “a man of substance,” literate and prosperous if not high-born.<sup>10</sup> And even if his social standing was not itself that of an aristocrat, he could at least afford to act like one.

The orthodox view – repeated as if it were uncontroversial in standard surveys of Greek art and archaeology – is that artists and “artisans had very low status” in ancient Greece,<sup>11</sup> and, it is true, a number of sculptors, painters, and vase-painters were or had been slaves.<sup>12</sup> But the ancient élite were, well, élitists who did not hold craftsmen of any sort and social standing in very high regard, finding them physically and therefore morally, politically, and militarily deficient. Thus, Herodotos, who puts the Greeks in the same company as

the Thrakians, Skythians, Persians, Lydians, and nearly all the barbarians [who] think that their fellow citizens who learn crafts [*tekhnas*], and even their children, are dishonorable, but think noble those who have been set free from work, particularly those who, released from labor, are free to go to war.

Xenophon's Socrates (despite being the son of a stonemason) agrees that

the so-called “banausic” occupations [*banausikai*] are both denounced and, quite rightly, held in very low esteem by states. For they utterly ruin the bodies of those who work at them and those of their supervisors, by forcing them to lead a sedentary life and to stay indoors, and some of them even to spend the whole day by the fire. When their bodies become effeminate, their souls too become much weaker. Furthermore, the so-called “banausic” occupations leave a man no spare time to be concerned about his friends and city. Consequently such men seem to treat their friends badly and to defend their countries badly, too. In fact, in some cities, especially in those reputed to excel in war, none of the citizens is permitted to work at the banausic occupations. (trans. S. Pomeroy)

Plato's Socrates, another arch-conservative, imagines that in the ideal Republic everyone would stay in his place: there would be nothing more absurd than

to find farmers dressed in fancy robes or potters enjoying themselves in a symposium (that might make them happy but it would undermine the order of the utopian state). And Plato's student Aristotle (who, like Xenophon, believed the craftsman weak-minded and so incapable of thinking or acting politically) concludes, simply:

The best of states will not make an artisan [*banausos*] a citizen.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the unkindest cuts of all are found in Lucian (it is the personified *Paideia*, or Education, who speaks):

Even if you should become a Pheidias or a Polykleitos and created many wondrous works, everyone will praise your skill [*tekhnē*], but no one who sees them, if he had any sense, would long to be like you. For you would be thought of like this: a *banausos*, a mechanic, a man who lives by the work of his hands.

and in Plutarch (who speaks for himself):

No one, no naturally good youth, having seen the Zeus at Pisa [i.e., Olympia], ever wanted to be Pheidias, or having seen the Hera at Argos wanted to be Polykleitos, or, having enjoyed their poems, ever wanted to be Anakreon or Philetas or Arkhilochos. For it does not necessarily follow, if a work delights you with its elegance, that its creator is worthy of your serious consideration.<sup>14</sup>

An early hint of such prejudice may be found in Homer, where, at the end of the *Iliad*'s first book, the lame craftsman god Hephaistos, maker of marvelous objects (such as the Shield of Achilles) that are "wonders to see," is a source of cruel amusement for the other gods (who, having laughed at his limp, return ungratefully to the splendid homes Hephaistos has built for them). At all events, the disparagement of the artisan and artist (and, in Plutarch's case, let it not be missed, the poet as well) is harsh. But we need not consider such famously derogatory opinions the rule at all times and in all places (besides, Lucian was a satirist, and his Education belittles almost every occupation in addition to that of the sculptor). Hephaistos may be misshapen and his ugliness (in the eyes of the other Olympians) comical, but Greek tradition also gives us the magical Telkhines, the first men to work iron and bronze, and Daidalos, hero and archetypal Cunning Artisan. The status of the Greek artist may have changed from period to period, the status of a particular Greek artist may have changed even in the course of his career, the status of one kind of artist (say, the vase-painter) was almost certainly very different from that of another (say, the panel painter),<sup>15</sup> and Greek attitudes toward the artist in general may have been at all times more ambivalent, shifting, and complex than the blanket prejudices recorded by Herodotos and expressed by Xenophon and Aristotle



suggest. And even if Plutarch's or Lucian's attitudes were widely shared among condescending, landowning bluebloods, so what? They are unlikely to have been shared by the average Greek – the average Greek was a *banaios* – or by members of the moneyed or business classes (who valued profit before birth), and they would have meant nothing to the artist himself, especially the upwardly mobile and prosperous one.<sup>16</sup> Well-born Greek youths may or may not have wanted to be Pheidias or Polykleitos (how many noble young Florentines wanted to be Michelangelo?), but many of them would not have minded being as wealthy and respected as Praxiteles (whose family had married into the land-owning Athenian aristocracy, who evidently made a fortune as a sculptor, and who may even have served as a liturgist – that is, as a state-selected financier of the public good who in his case paid for a dramatic or choral production), or his son Kephisodotos the Younger (who was a liturgist even richer and more called-upon than his father),<sup>17</sup> or Telesinos of Athens (who in the early 3rd century donated two statues to the Sanctuary of Apollo on Delos, restored as many other statues as needed it free of charge, and for that was given a crown of laurel at the Delian festival and the right to own land on the island),<sup>18</sup> or the early 2nd-century Neoclassical sculptor Damophon of Messene (who made and donated the cult images at Lykosoura and who for that and other acts of largess was apparently built a hero shrine at Messene, possibly crowned with a bronze statue of the sculptor himself),<sup>19</sup> or Eukheir and Euboulides, 2nd-century Athenian sculptors and members of a distinguished family of artisans who earned impressive public honors.<sup>20</sup> Upper-class Greeks like Xenophon and Plutarch might have found it demeaning that sculptors like these labored and sweated and got dirty while they worked, but money talks, and especially in the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods it spoke the language of prestige.<sup>21</sup> As for wall- or panel-painters, they were apparently in a different category from the start: Plutarch's "naturally good youths" might not have refused the accolades the early 5th-century painter Polygnotos of Thasos received at Delphi (where he was granted free food and lodging for life) and Athens (where he was granted citizenship),<sup>22</sup> and Pliny has nice things to say about painters such as Pamphilos (essentially a Late Classical Renaissance Man, schooled in all branches of learning) and the art of painting itself, which he says was fundamental to a Greek liberal education and was an honored profession practiced by distinguished men.<sup>23</sup>

Sweeping generalizations about the supposedly low status of the Greek artist simply sweep aside too much. Xenophon, Aristotle, and Plutarch, on their high horses, might not have held him in much esteem, but the very first Greek sculptor whose full name we know – probably the first one to sign his work and announce his identity and so consciously distinguish himself from other sculptors – in fact acted very much like later sculptors renowned for their

success, wealth, and even civic standing. Like them, Euthykartides, maker and dedicant, must have sweated plenty when he carved his kouros. But hammering away at a marble block with a chisel for a year or so would not have made his body soft or effeminate (what was Xenophon thinking?), and the fusion of dedication and signature on the base of a statue in which he had personally invested so much [Fig. 2] indicates that he was no common laborer, no mere *banausos* – at least not in his own mind, which is the one that counts.



## CHAPTER TWO

### GREEK "EXCEPTIONALISM" IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

THERE ARE ANCIENT ARTISTIC TRADITIONS THAT DESERVE TO BE CHARACTERIZED as “anonymous and impersonal,” but they are not Greek. They are Egyptian and, even more, Mesopotamian.

It is not that we know nothing about the Egyptian artist or architect or that we have no names (as handbooks sometimes imply). We have plenty of names. There is, to begin with, the Second Dynasty sculptor Kachet, the earliest artist whose name we definitely know.<sup>1</sup> And then, in the Third Dynasty, there is the most famous Egyptian “artisan” of all: Imhotep, certainly the mastermind behind, and very likely the actual architect of, Djoser’s Step Pyramid complex at Sakkara – something genuinely new under the sun. Imhotep was evidently a sculptor, too, to judge from the hieroglyphs on the base of a colossal (if very fragmentary) statue of his pharaoh from Sakkara, naming him and listing his many titles and talents [Fig. 3]:

The Treasurer of the King of Lower Egypt, the First after the King of Upper Egypt, Administrator of the Great Palace, Hereditary Lord, the High Priest of Heliopolis, Imhotep the builder, the sculptor, the maker of stone vases . . .<sup>2</sup>

There is no explicit signature here – nothing like “Imhotep made me” – but it is probable that this member of the royal élite, this “first one after the king,” was responsible for major advances in both Egyptian architecture and sculpture: there had been nothing like the Step Pyramid on earth before, and



3. Broken base of a statue of Pharaoh Djoser, with the titles of Imhotep. Old Kingdom, c. 2660 BCE. Drawing by Lynn-Marie Kara after Clayton 1994, 33.

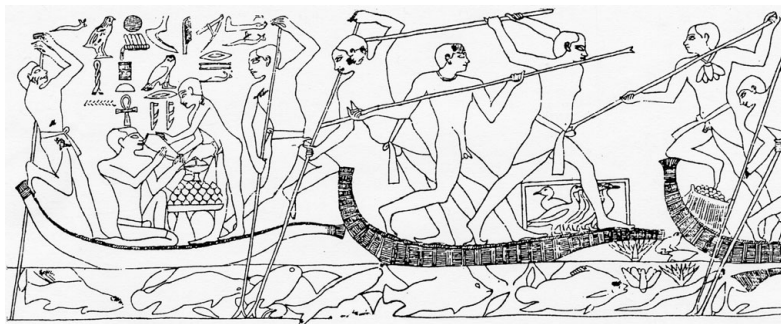
the statues of Djoser are the first life-size stone statues from Egypt (or just about anywhere else). Still, the Egyptian temperament or tradition lacked the means to conceptualize such an innovator and creator – it “allowed no room for the recognition of individual genius”<sup>3</sup> – and Imhotep was remembered later not so much as an architect or artist but only as one “wise man” among other wise men and, still later, as a minor god of healing.

The list of Egyptian monumental tombs and temples is impressive and long; the list of major Egyptian architects after Imhotep is impressive but short. There is, for example, Nefermaat, who, among other projects, began the Great Pyramid of Khufu at Giza, and his son Hemiunu, who became “Vizier and Overseer of All the King’s Works” and finished it.<sup>4</sup> There is Amenhotep, son of Hapu, another Overseer of All the King’s Works, who seems to have established the canonical New Kingdom temple plan for his pharaoh, Amenhotep III. And there is Senmut, who built the extraordinarily original funerary complex of Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahari and who even inserted his name and likeness behind one of the doors of the mortuary temple (presumably with the female pharaoh’s consent).<sup>5</sup> Hemiunu was buried in one of the largest mastabas at Giza; Amenhotep was, exceptionally, allowed to build his own funerary temple behind his pharaoh’s; and Amenhotep and Senmut in particular were honored with a large number of portraits that emphasized their importance and political status.<sup>6</sup>

A few Egyptian architects could, then, enjoy very high esteem in life and in the afterlife. But most were nameless functionaries. Perhaps the typical Egyptian attitude may be gleaned from the so-called Berlin Leather Roll, a copy of an early 12th Dynasty text describing preparations for the construction of a new temple to Atum. When the time comes for the Pharaoh to appoint the architect, he addresses his master-builder:

... It is your counsel that carries out all the works that my majesty desires to bring about. You are the one in charge of them, who will act according to my wish... Order the workmen to do according to your design.

The Pharaoh thus directs his agent, but he does not address him by name.<sup>7</sup> The architect here is truly anonymous. The contrast with an Athenian building



4. "Self-Portrait" of Ni-Ankh-Ptah, from Tomb of Ptah-Hotep, Sakkara. Old Kingdom. From J. Quibell, *The Ramesseum* (London 1896), pl. XXXII.

inscription such as the fragmentary Nike Temple Decree, wherein, following the motions of [Glau]kos and Hestiaios, the Athenian *demos* instructs Kallikrates to fit the sanctuary with new doors and build a new temple and altar to his own specifications (Kallikrates' name was engraved at least three times into the stone), is eloquent.<sup>8</sup>

As for "artists," "painters," "outline-draftsmen," and "sculptors" – the four principal titles by which Egyptian artists were known – they are often depicted painting or sculpting in their workshops on the walls of tombs, but they are not always identified by name.<sup>9</sup> In the Old Kingdom tomb of Ankh-ma-Hor at Sakkara, for example, one figure is labeled simply "Chief Sculptor," another simply "Painter."<sup>10</sup> And in the 11th Dynasty tomb of Beket at Beni Hasan, a variety of workshops are depicted on the walls, but the artisans are anonymous.<sup>11</sup> State annals often mention works of art, but not the names of the artists who produced them.<sup>12</sup> Still, names are not hard to come by elsewhere. There are, for example, the outline-draftsman Semer-ka, who is recorded as the designer of the Old Kingdom tomb of Neb-em-akhet, and In-haf, who built it.<sup>13</sup> There is the painter Khentika, shown with brush and palette in hand on the wall of his own tomb at Sakkara.<sup>14</sup> And there is Ni-Ankh-Ptah, the "overseer of sculptors" who apparently designed and supervised the execution of the painted reliefs in the Old Kingdom Tomb of Ptah-Hotep at Sakkara [Fig. 4]. But Ni-Ankh-Ptah depicted himself (or had himself depicted) not sculpting or painting in his studio or carving the reliefs of the tomb itself, but drinking beer on a boat during a tournament on the Nile. That is, he is not overtly recognized for, or associated with, any particular work of art: he is on the wall because he was one of Ptah-Hotep's trusted and honored retainers, one among many members of an élite household (and his image, like theirs, was probably included only with the consent of his patron).<sup>15</sup> This kind of "portrait signature," as it is known, is not really a portrait (except for his balding pate – itself a conventional marker of aging – Ni-Ankh-Ptah looks like everyone else on the wall, stereotypical and without individuation), and it is not really a signature (the hieroglyphs naming him constitute a label, not a

claim of agency). Portrait signatures like this, then, typically insert the figures of artists into workshop scenes, or into populous scenes of everyday life or ritual, depicted on the walls of tombs or temples, and in this manner imply the artist's role in the project. But none of them present a true physical likeness of the artist, and few of them explicitly credit him with anything specific or even allude to the actual carving or painting of the tomb or temple in which the "portrait" appears.

One exception is found on the wall of a provincial Old Kingdom tomb where, behind the huge figure of the tomb-owner, there is the much smaller figure of the artist and the text:

The draftsman Seni says: I wrote [i.e., painted] this tomb of Count Kheni;  
I, moreover, wrote this tomb alone.

This appears to be a signature in the usual sense of the word – a claim directly taking credit for a particular work of art (though after the completion and sealing of the tomb it made its claim only to the spirits of the dead and the gods).<sup>16</sup> The text on the Middle Kingdom (11th Dynasty) *stele*\* of the sculptor Iritisen is less a signature than an autobiography: his image appears twice on the stone, he calls himself "the chief of the artists," and he boasts (among other things) that he is wise in his art, that he stands above all men in his learning, and, apparently, that he had mastered a number of poses (such as "the walking of an image of man," "the carriage of a woman," or "captives") that were more expressive than the norm. Iritisen's is a funerary stele, and presumably he carved it himself. But there is not much else like it from the three hundred years of the Middle Kingdom.<sup>17</sup>

What there is, beginning in the Middle Kingdom, is a second kind of artist's signature, one that is almost always found on stelai: there is no portrait of the artist this time, but a simple hieroglyphic line with his name and title written in a narrow space ruled off below or beside the main text and relief – literally, a "marginal signature." On the edge of the 19th Dynasty stele of Pehemnuter, for example, outside the lines marking off the relief proper, the names "Ihnem the outline-draftsman" and "Ptahemuya the painter" appear: there can be little doubt that they made the work, and signed it.<sup>18</sup>

We also know the names of major artists who were attached to some of the greatest courts in the history of the New Kingdom: Men, for example, the chief sculptor of Amenhotep III and so possibly the sculptor of the two Colossi of Memnon at Thebes (since there is no signature, we cannot be sure); or Bek, Men's son and the chief sculptor of the strange heretic pharaoh Akhenaten, whom the pharaoh himself supposedly instructed in the ways of art, commanding him to break with traditional Egyptian idealism, and who is shown pot-bellied beside his wife in a possible self-portrait in Berlin [Fig. 5];<sup>19</sup> or Iuwty, a sculptor who is called "chief artist of the great king's wife Tiy" and who is depicted working in his studio, along with his assistants, on the wall of



5. Stele with portraits of Bek and Taheri. New Kingdom. Aegyptisches Museum, Berlin (ÄM 31009). Photo: bpk, Berlin/ Staatliche Museen/Margarete Büsing/Art Resource, New York.

a tomb at Amarna (he is shown painting a statue of the queen's daughter); or Tuthmose, in whose Amarna workshop a number of unfinished statues were found (including the famous portrait of Nefertiti in Berlin); or Huy, whose name appears in Ramses II's Great Temple at Abu Simbel.<sup>20</sup> Many other Egyptian artists of all periods – Ahmose and Ihy and Ibi and Wazi and Penofer and so on – were, again, allowed to insert labeled images of themselves on the walls of tombs, where they would achieve their own immortality. And when in the hieroglyphs of a 20th Dynasty tomb at El-Kab a certain Merire brags that he was “a learned painter, skilled with his fingers” and not just an “outline-draftsman,” the claim must have met with the approval of, and reflected well upon, his master, Setau: his patron could afford the best, and welcomed the artist into his household for eternity.<sup>21</sup>

So, again, the problem is not that we do not know the names of any Egyptian architects or artists – we know about nine hundred of them.<sup>22</sup> We even have reliefs that purport to represent some of them. The problem is that the names and portraits are drawn from a period some three thousand years long, and so explicit signatures are few and even farther between. In the entire history of Egyptian art there are, in fact, only a couple of dozen works that can be tied directly and securely to the names of their makers.<sup>23</sup> Knowing names is not the same as having signatures, and in Egypt there are almost no equivalents of “Euthykartides the Naxian made and dedicated me.” And, significantly, virtually all of the most significant works of Egyptian art are truly anonymous. We have, for example, no idea who carved the Palette of Narmer or established the icon for pharaonic victory it bears, a formula that will be repeated (with some variation) over and over again, even after the Roman conquest. We have no idea who, in such works as the wooden panel of Hesira from Sakkara, established the conventional method of representing the human figure as a strict frontal-profile composite, strictly proportioned according to a grid 18 fist-sized squares high. The canonical, orthodox nature of Egyptian art ensured a uniformly high standard of production and even allowed for the occasional appearance of an artist’s name or image (though one Egyptian artist looks very much like any other). But convention smothered most impulses for stylistic originality, and daring experiments such as the servant girl shown in back three-quarter view in the 18th Dynasty Tomb of Rekhmira at Thebes<sup>24</sup> or even extraordinary movements like that associated with Bek and Tell el-Amarna are, in the end, purposefully abandoned. Canonical art suppresses individuality, and in Egypt true “talent was the ability to reproduce canonical conventions appropriately” and skillfully, not to make things new.<sup>25</sup>

Egyptian art is, then, an art of replication rather than invention. It is also proof that nothing succeeds like success: Narmer (around 3100 BCE), then Tuthmosis III (sixteen hundred years later), and then the Roman emperor Titus (fifteen hundred years later still) are all represented smiting their kneeling foes in essentially the same way.<sup>26</sup> And Hatshepsut, the female pharaoh, is most often represented as an idealized, youthful, swarthy male like other pharaohs because that is what tradition and convention dictated (and because that is what the savvy Hatshepsut knew her people expected). A very few architects like Kaemtjenenet (a late Fifth Dynasty contractor who in his own tomb at Sakkara proudly details the difficulties he had to overcome installing a monumental sphinx in a temple)<sup>27</sup> or artists like Seni might boast of their technical skills and achievements because they were human and like any human being sought credit and recognition for their work. But the work of the Egyptian artist in general is not an expression of individuality, personality, or originality. It is an expression of his adherence or submission to powerful conceptual and proportional formulae that, by imposing an unnatural order upon the natural world with an authoritarianism rivaling that of the pharaonic regime, were



intended precisely to banish the irregular, the exceptional, and the personal. When the canon is all, the point is *not* to be different or original, and so the individual is effaced and a true signature – that declaration of achievement, pride, identity and difference – is a rare thing.<sup>28</sup>

Canons are perhaps not quite as strict in the art of the ancient Near East,<sup>29</sup> but a uniformity of conventions still afforded little imaginative space for individual expression. Mesopotamian art (Sumerian, Akkadian, Neo-Sumerian, Old Babylonian, Assyrian) is, if anything, even more “anonymous and impersonal” than Egyptian. Oppenheim’s summation still holds: “the artists who produced [Mesopotamian] reliefs, stelae, the sculptures, the statues of kings cast in copper and in precious metals, and whatever other works of art which may be lost,

remain completely unknown . . . References to artists and their work are rare even in letters . . . The personality of the artist, however, remains completely beyond our reach.”<sup>30</sup> Near Eastern documents of any period barely mention artisans or artists – when they do, they usually refer to them generically – and they are silent about the aesthetic value of art or the importance of innovation.<sup>31</sup> A detailed tablet from Ur, dating to the reign of Ibši-Sin (c. 2013–1989 BCE), contains a summary of work done by eight temple workshops – those of the chisel-worker (sculptor), the jeweler, the lapidary, the carpenter, and so on – but there are no names.<sup>32</sup> Artistic conventions served the prestige and purposes of patrons, not the imagination of artists, and the abundant records from a site such as Mari, though they occasionally mention the name of an artisan, suggest craftsmen were essentially imprisoned by the palatial economy: the Mari archives “dampen any fantasy we may have about artists driven by an inner compulsion toward self-expression.”<sup>33</sup> And when, long before that, the kings of Ur or Lagash had themselves depicted on plaques and stelai or in statues carrying baskets for mud-brick, or carrying builder’s tools over their shoulders, or sitting with temple blueprints on their laps [Fig. 6], and when the texts inscribed on those works claim that “Ur-Nanše, king of Lagash . . . built



6. Portrait of Gudea of Lagash, holding plan of a sanctuary. c. 2090 BCE. Louvre AO 2. Photo: author.

the temple of Ningirsu,” or that Gudea gave his own statue the title “For my lord, I built his house, life is my reward,” the trope is conventional and clear: the agent of the project, the one responsible for executing it at every level, is the king alone.<sup>34</sup> Credit for the temple belongs completely to him, and the actual master builders are invisible. The agency of the king and the anonymity of the builder and craftsman endure even under the Persian Empire. It was Darius himself who built his palace at Susa (c. 500 BCE), according to the preserved record of its construction:

This is the palace which at Susa I [Darius]  
erected. From afar its ornamentation was brought.  
Down the earth was dug, until rock-bottom I reached . . .  
On that rubble a palace I erected. (lines 22–27)

Darius concedes that he did not work the gold or make the brick himself: Egyptians, Medes, and Babylonians did that. And he did not cut or carve stone for the palace:

. . . the artisans who  
wrought the stone, they were Ionians and  
Sardians [i.e., Lydians]. (lines 47–49)

But the craftsmen, builders, and stonemasons referred to in the record, including Ionian Greeks, are completely anonymous.<sup>35</sup> We might once more contrast a Greek building account: a single Acropolis marble inscription detailing the completion of the Erechtheion lists payments to an architect named Arkhilochos, a scaffold-builder named Manis, an encaustic painter named Dionysiodoros, a stonemason named Ameiniades, and sculptors named Phyromachos and Praxias and Antiphanes and so on.<sup>36</sup> An inscription like this was intended to make state expenditures transparent, to inform the people of democratic Athens where their money went. To do so, it names names, and that makes it different from virtually any official document from the Near East. There, to put it simply, the recording of individual artistic accomplishment is absent; the impulse to declare identity and authorship, if ever felt, is never expressed, as if it were foreign to a depersonalizing Near Eastern temperament.<sup>37</sup> An artist’s signature does not exist.

Greece is a very different story. Even though most works of art are themselves unsigned (a frustrating point that we will have to concede more than once), the history of Greek art in just the century between, say, 550 and 450 BCE boasts more true signatures – more explicit statements of agency using third-person verbs like *epoiesen*\* (“made”) and *egraphisen*\* (“painted”) – than Egyptian and Near Eastern art do in three millenia. That probably means something: it probably has something to do with the relatively high esteem in which Greeks *not* named Xenophon, Aristotle, or Plutarch could hold the artist, and



certainly with the pride the Greek artist had in himself. The Greeks, at any rate, stand as exceptions in the Mediterranean world. And they are different not just from the Egyptians and the peoples of the Near East, but also from peoples a bit closer to home – the Etruscans and Romans.

We here note Greek émigrés to Etruria like Aristonothos, who is usually thought to have set up shop in Caere c. 650 BCE largely because a single *krater*\* he made and signed was found there [Pl. II]. As we shall see, ARISTONOTHOS EPOIESEN (*Aristonothos made [me]*) – one of the earliest of all Greek signatures – is written in a scene of the Blinding of Polyphemos, but it is not clear how many Etruscan residents of Caere would have understood even so brief a Greek sentence, or for whom Aristonothos originally made the vase.<sup>38</sup> At all events, it is remarkable that the earliest signature from Etruria is a Greek signature. But other Greeks would later reside and work in several cities of Archaic and Classical Etruria, very likely painting the walls of some tombs at Tarquinia and certainly painting (and sometimes signing) locally produced vases. To this category belong a potter who around 480 BCE signed his name, Arnthe Praxias, in Greek, on an *amphora*\* in Paris – he was apparently the leader of a group of potters centered at Vulci specializing in the production of imitation Red Figure vases – and a Metron who c. 440 BCE signed, in Etruscan, a Red Figure cup from Populonia, using the Etruscan form of his name (METRU MENECE – *Metru made [me]*).<sup>39</sup>

But of Etruscan artists and architects themselves, we know next to nothing, and our ignorance cannot completely be the result of our only partial understanding of the Etruscan language. We hear of Vulca of Veii, who in the late 6th century made the great terracotta Jupiter and roof-top quadrigas for the Capitulum in Rome, as well as a praiseworthy Hercules Fictilis. These were “the most magnificent statues of their day,” according to Pliny,<sup>40</sup> and it has been difficult to resist linking Vulca to the fine terracotta revetments and statuary from the Portonaccio temple in his hometown. But Vulca is the only Etruscan artist that our literary sources remember by name – the only one.<sup>41</sup> And while statements of ownership or dedication are frequently found on pots and goldwork – *I am the jug of Karkana*, for example, inscribed on an early 7th-century vase from Caere, or *Venel Atelinas dedicated this to the sons of Tinia* on a late 6th-century vase from Tarquinia, or *I [am] of Arath Velavesna [of] gold*. *Mamurke Tursikina gave [me]* written in granulation on a late seventh-century gold fibula in Paris – artists’ signatures are few. The basic formulae may have been suggested by signed Greek imports, though they are logical enough. On a cup of the late 6th century there is, for example, MI SATAIIES AVELE ACASCE (*Sataie Avele made me*), or, on a bucchero oinochoe of c. 600 BCE, *Velthur Tulumnes made me and dedicated me*, or, on the neck of a late 7th-century bucchero aryballos incised with lions and birds from Grotte Santo Stefano, the

inscription MI ARATHIALE ZICHUCHE (*I was written [i.e., incised or drawn] by Arath*).<sup>42</sup> The apparent leader of a later group of potters appears to have stamped the handles of several askoi (round pouring vessels) with the words RUVFIES [:] ACIL, which appears to mean *Ruvfies' work* – a trademark, perhaps. And such signatures as PUTINA CEIZRA ACIL and THANSESCA NUMNAL ACIL are found elsewhere on pots and mirrors.<sup>43</sup> But there are not many of them, and there are none at all on any “major” Etruscan work. With only one possible exception – an Aranth Heracanasa whose name appears on a wall of the Tomb of the Jugglers at Tarquinia – the Etruscans did not sign their tomb-paintings. That, perhaps, is not surprising: though labels and other texts are inscribed on tomb walls, readership was obviously limited. But whoever wrote the dedication TINSCVIL (*To Tina*) on the right foreleg of the Chimaera of Arezzo or the information about Ayle Metele on the hem of L'Arringatore's toga had no desire, or else did not have the option, to declare himself (assuming artist and author were the same).<sup>44</sup> It is possible to construct a number of Etruscan vase-painters on paper: connoisseurship has given us the prolific and distinctive late 6th-century Micali Painter, for example.<sup>45</sup> But the impulse for self-identification among Etruscan artists seems to have been weak.<sup>46</sup>

As for the Romans, there are, of course, many artists named in inscriptions or in the literary sources dealing with the artistic environment of Rome and the Roman world during the Republic and Empire, but the vast majority of names are Greek and no doubt belonged to ethnic *Graeci* brought to Rome under commission or Greek slaves or freedmen put to work by Roman patrons in the city and elsewhere.<sup>47</sup> There is, for example, Pasiteles, a Greek from south Italy noted for his sculpture and metalwork who became a Roman citizen in 88 BCE and wrote five (lost) volumes on the most famous works of art in the world (Pliny used them as a source). We do not have any works by Pasiteles himself, but we have a coldly Neoclassical youth (known in several versions) by one of his pupils – Stephanos, another Greek.<sup>48</sup> There is the sculptor Arkesilaos, who worked for the consul and general Licinius Lucullus (described as his close friend) and whose plaster models were said to bring higher prices than the finished statues of others.<sup>49</sup> There are Menodotos and [ . . . ]phon of Rhodes, who made the bronze Piombino Apollo in the 1st century BCE and tried to pass it off as an Archaic Greek original (their signatures appear on a lead strip found inside the hollow cast statue – they could not resist claiming the work for themselves, even surreptitiously).<sup>50</sup> There is Aspasios, who around the middle of the 1st century BCE signed a red jasper gem with a bust of Pheidias' Athena Parthenos,<sup>51</sup> and Gnaios, who a decade or two later engraved and signed a profile of Herakles on an aquamarine in the British Museum,<sup>52</sup> and Sostratos, who signed several cameos and an intaglio while working (possibly for the imperial family) in the late 1st century BCE,<sup>53</sup> and Dioskourides, who

engraved (and presumably signed) a gem with so fine an image of Augustus that he and later emperors used it as their official seal.<sup>54</sup> During the late Republic and the reign of Augustus, in fact, the Roman fascination with gems – most of them cut by Greeks – became virtually fetishistic. In other genres there is the aptly named Kheirisophos (“Skilled with his Hands”), who during the reign of Augustus made and signed two superb silver cups that somehow made their way to the grave of a local chieftain at Hoby in Denmark.<sup>55</sup> We have from the grotto at Sperlonga colossal marble groups representing some of the adventures of Odysseus. They are probably early Imperial remakings or variations of Hellenistic prototypes installed in the cave during the reign of Tiberius, and one of them – Skylla attacking the hero’s ship – is signed (in a panel on the ship’s side) *Athanadoros, son of Hagesandros, and Hagesandros, son of Paionios, and Polydoros the son of Polydoros, Rhodians, made this* [Fig. 7]. The signature, by naming the sculptors’ fathers and emphasizing that all



7. Detail of a panel on Odysseus’ ship from the Skylla Group, Sperlonga. It bears the signatures of Athenadoros, Hagesandros, and Polydoros of Rhodes; late 1st century BCE or early 1st century CE. Photo: author.

are Rhodians, stresses their desirable Greekness and, implicitly, the high quality of their work.<sup>56</sup> Three more Greeks – Pythonymos, Pytheas, and Nikokrates – jointly signed an elaborate iron, bronze, silver and copper strongbox found in a villa (B) that once overlooked the Bay of Naples at Oplontis: the villa was buried (along with 54 human beings desperately awaiting a rescue that never came) by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE. In their signature (prominently displayed in a rectangular panel along the edge of the lid) the metalworkers describe themselves as *andrioi Herakleidou*, “the workmen of Herakleides,” presumably the owner of a local Campanian shop, and another ethnic Greek.<sup>57</sup> And we have from the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum (another Vesuvian victim) a fine bronze herm replicating the head of the *Doryphoros* of Polykleitos but signed *Apollonios, son of Arkhias, the Athenian, made it* [Fig. 8]. Refined



8. Bronze herm replicating the *Doryphoros* of Polykleitos, signed by Apollonios of Athens. Naples, Archaeological Museum 4885. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.

visitors to the elegant, sculpture-rich villa would have instantly recognized the work as a copy of a famous and oft-reproduced Greek bronze masterpiece (or part of it), and so Apollonios was not trying to deceive anyone: his signature is a claim not to originality but to a mastery of technique equal to that of Polykleitos himself.<sup>58</sup> Pliny raves about his own contemporary Zenodoros, a Greek who made the Colossos of Nero (said to have been 120 Roman feet tall) and whose work marked, in the eyes of the encyclopediast, the height of bronze-casting (on a smaller scale, he was also an exquisite silversmith).<sup>59</sup> Later, in the early 2nd century CE, two Greek sculptors named Zenas (father and son, presumably) signed companion portrait busts from Rome. And two dark marble centaurs (one old and tormented by love, the other young and intoxicated by it), both of them jointly signed by Aristeas and Papias of Aphrodisias, made their way to Hadrian's villa at Tivoli: the centaurs are most often thought to be copies of lost Hellenistic bronze originals – Aristeas and Papias would, then, be the names of Greek copyists working in a Roman context – but it is unclear whether they were made in Italy or Asia Minor [Figs. 9, 10].<sup>60</sup> Also in the 2nd century CE, a Greek named Neikias signed a fine mosaic



9. Black Marble "Young Centaur" by Aristeeas and Papias of Aphrodisias, from Tivoli. Early 2nd century CE. Photo: author.

representing Zeus and Ganymede that probably adorned a luxurious house in the Roman east (he signed it NEIKIAC EPSEPHOTHETECEN – essentially, *Neikias mosaic-ed it*). Later still, in the 3rd century, a Greek named Prokolos signed a mosaic at Ostia.<sup>61</sup> And an Athenian marble sculptor was commissioned to re-create on a huge scale a Herakles by the Late Classical sculptor Lysippos (the so-called Hercules Farnese, originally a fixture in the Baths of Caracalla) [Pl. III]. GLYKON ATHENAIOS EPOIEI (*Glykon the Athenian made [me]*) is engraved on the rock beside the weary hero [Fig. 11].<sup>62</sup> It is thus no surprise that the last ancient sculptor known to have signed his work was a Greek: Patrophilos, who made an equestrian bronze statue of the emperor Theodosius II (402–450 CE) that stood in Constantinople.<sup>63</sup>





10. Signatures of Aristeas and Papias of Aphrodisias on plinth of “Young Centaur” from Tivoli. Photo: author.

Rome and the Roman world were clearly full of Greek statues (and other works) legitimately acquired or forcibly taken from Greece, and it was full of Greek sculptors who made statues (originals, reproductions, or variants) for Romans. But Roman sculptors themselves are not often named in the record: the nebulous Coponius (who c. 55 BCE made 14 statues of personified nations or peoples for the Theater of Pompey) and Avianius Evander (who in the middle of the 1st century restored a 4th-century Greek statue of Artemis, made by Timotheos, on the Palatine) are two of the very few exceptions.<sup>64</sup> So it is perhaps not surprising that when the poet Statius effusively praises a colossal equestrian statue of the Emperor Domitian that stood in the center of the Forum Romanum, comparing it favorably to an equestrian statue by the great Lysippos in Caesar’s Forum nearby (originally an Alexander, the Macedonian’s head had been replaced with Caesar’s), he finds no room in nearly a hundred lines for the name of the sculptor.<sup>65</sup> One has the feeling the information was omitted because the sculptor was a Roman and Roman sculptors were not worth mentioning (the name of a Greek artist might have added to the statue’s cachet).

Painters and architects are another matter. Now, many Greek painters made their way to Rome, too. Near the very beginning of the Republic, for example, Damophilos and Gorgasos were called from south Italy (probably) to decorate the Temple of Ceres in Rome with paintings or painted terracotta reliefs: they signed their work in verse, and they signed in Greek.<sup>66</sup> In the early 2nd century BCE, a Greek painter from somewhere in Asia, evidently granted citizenship at Ardea (south of Rome) and given a new name, Marcus Plautius, signed his paintings in a temple of Juno with an immodest epigram saying that his art would be praised forever.<sup>67</sup> After the decisive Battle of Pydna in 168

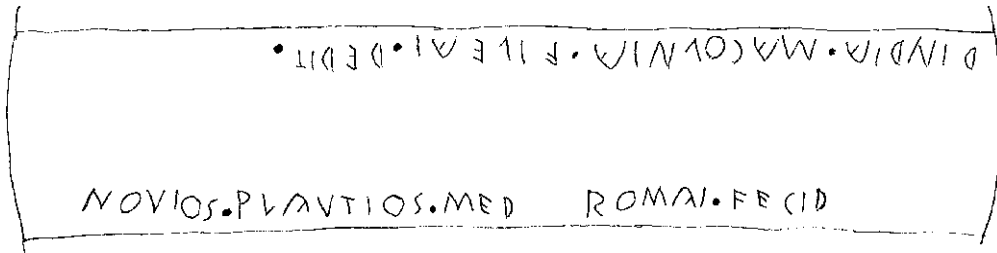


11. Signature of Glykon of Athens on the *Hercules Farnese*, early 3rd century CE. Naples, Archaeological Museum 6001. Photo: author.

BCE, Metrodoros was brought to Rome from Athens to paint panels for the triumph of L. Aemilius Paullus. And Iaia, an early 1st-century arrival from Kyzikos (on the coast of Asia Minor), painted portraits (mostly of women, including herself) that were “quickly done” yet were still the most expensive of her day.<sup>68</sup>

But Rome produced a fair number of great painters of its own, and some of them (at least early on) came from the ranks of the nobility (painting was, again, regarded as more genteel than chiseling hard marble or casting hot bronze). The noble C. Fabius Pictor, for example, painted the walls of the Temple of Salus (304 BCE) and signed his name upon them expressly so that his labor would not be “obliterated by anonymity.”<sup>69</sup> There was Pacuvius, a Republican playwright as well as a painter, whose work was on display in the Temple of Hercules in the Forum Boarium (it was second only to Fabius Pictor’s in renown, Pliny says, but after him “painting was not looked upon [by Romans] as a suitable occupation for the hands of distinguished men”).<sup>70</sup> There was Turpilius, a left-handed painter from the equestrian class; and the innovative Augustan landscape muralist Studius; and Famulus, who gravely wore a toga when he painted Nero’s Golden House (“the prison for his artistry”); and Cornelius Pinus and Atticus Priscus, painters of temples restored by Vespasian, whose Flavian styles were evidently less florid than Famulus’ and fittingly recalled more old-fashioned, simpler works.<sup>71</sup>

Above all, architects stand out in the Roman tradition. There is, of course, Vitruvius Pollio, author of *De Architectura* and architect of (among other buildings) the Augustan basilica at Fanum. There was, long before him, Cossutius, brought to Athens by a Hellenistic king c. 175 BCE to finish, in the



12. The signature of Novios Plautios on the lid of the Ficoroni cista. Drawing after Dohrn 1972, pl. 20.

Corinthian order, the huge dipteral Temple of Olympian Zeus southeast of the Acropolis (he did not quite succeed).<sup>72</sup> There are, after him, Severus and Celer, Nero's architects, "who had both the inventiveness and the audacity to attempt through art what even nature denied."<sup>73</sup> There is Rabirius, whose "miraculous" palace of Domitian on the Palatine earned Martial's praise and a favorable comparison to the temple of "Pheidian Jupiter" at Olympia.<sup>74</sup> We might include Apollodoros of Damascus, architect of the Forum of Trajan and other buildings, even though he was a Greek born in Syria who worked for a Roman emperor born in Spain, and Aristainetos, a Greek who built and signed in very large letters the huge Temple of Hadrian at Kyzikos, unabashedly calling himself *dios* ("noble," "divine").<sup>75</sup>

From the level earth, with the wealth of the whole of Asia,  
and with countless hands, the godlike Aristainetos erected me.

And there is Hadrian himself, who seems to have at least drawn up plans for ribbed, pumpkin-like domes such as those found in his Villa at Tivoli and who probably designed the double-cella Temple of Venus and Rome in the capital but who got fed up with Apollodoros' snide criticisms and (supposedly) had him put to death (*caveat architectus*).<sup>76</sup> That Severus and Celer and Rabirius (and Hadrian, too) propelled the "Roman architectural revolution" goes without saying, and the originality of their buildings is beyond dispute.

But actual signatures signed by Romans (as opposed to Greeks employed by Romans) are rare. Fabius Pictor's, though recorded, does not survive. A certain Trebius Pomponios engraved the blade of an apparently 4th-century sword recently found in southern Latium with a signature saying he made it in Rome.<sup>77</sup> And in a signature on the lid of the renowned and roughly contemporary large bronze toiletry box known as the Ficoroni cista (c. 350–300 BCE), Novios Plautios says he made the container in Rome, too [Fig. 12]:

NOVIOS.PLAVTIUS.MED ROMAI.FECID. DINDIA.MALCONIA.  
FILEAI.DEDIT

*Novios Plautios made me in Rome. Dindia Malconia gave [me] to her daughter.*





13. Cornelian gem engraved by Felix. Courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1966.1808.

But this is a special case. Novios Plautios inscribed the *cista* in Latin and emphasized the place of manufacture, but he made it for an Etruscan woman and it was found in Praeneste, an ancient center of Etruscan metalwork where such engraved *cistae* have almost invariably been found. So, the work is perhaps best considered, somehow, both Roman and Etruscan.<sup>78</sup> A large cornelian gem in Oxford, engraved with a scene from Greek myth – in a sanctuary of Poseidon outside the walls of Troy, Diomedes, who has escaped with the sacred Palladion, meets Odysseus, who calls his attention to the legs of a priest he has just slain – may be another special case [Fig. 13]. One inscription records the name of its owner, Calpurnius Severus, another is the signature of the artist, Felix, and those are both good Latin names. But if the names are Latin, the texts are written in Greek (PHĒLIX EPOIEI), and so it appears that Felix was not just working within a Greek iconographic tradition but was in fact a Greek (slave or freedman) who had taken a Roman name and worked for Roman patrons.<sup>79</sup> The gem is another hybrid, both Roman and Greek.

It is remarkable that on all the walls and all the murals of Pompeii – a text-rich place, loaded with *dipinti* announcing elections or promoting gladiatorial contests and graffiti of all kinds – there is only one artist's signature: it is the cursory LUCIUS PINXIT (*Lucius painted this*) in the *biclinium* of the House of D. Octavius Quarto (a.k.a. the House of Loreius Tiburtinus). It is, however, not clear whether Lucius is taking credit for the awful paintings of *Pyramis and Thisbe* and *Narcissus* on the wall above, or whether he is just referring to the painted bench on which the signature is actually found.<sup>80</sup> Although one Greek

mosaicist (the excellent Dioskourides of Samos) is represented by signed work at Pompeii [Pl. IV], no Roman is, and the few dozen Roman/Latin mosaicists who sign their names elsewhere – T. Sennius Felix, for example – are minor.<sup>81</sup>

There is, it is true, an abundance of signatures and brand-names on the fine, red-gloss, mould-made, and mass-produced Roman pottery known as terra sigillata (its best known variety is Arretine ware, basically Augustan in date, produced at Arezzo). The names are usually stamped on the floor of the vessel but can appear in relief on the exterior as part of the decoration, and they belong to such individual artisans, freedmen, or factory owners as Auctus, Montanus, P. Cornelius, Cn. Ateius, M. Perennius Tigranus, or L. Rasinius Pisanus (a captain of industry from the region of Pisa). In the late 1st century CE, the trademarks of manufacturers eclipse the names of the individual craftsmen working for them. The correlation between signing or branding, on the one hand, and commerce, on the other, is particularly strong here: the names and trademarks are advertisements.<sup>82</sup> But signatures in other Roman media are harder to come by. When Plutarch mentions an early statue of Junius Brutus, it is “the Romans of old” who set it up; when Dionysios mentions an early statue of Horatius, it is “the people” who set it up; when Suetonius catalogues the building program of Domitian, it is the emperor who rebuilt the Capitolium and constructed the Forum of Nerva and his hippodrome, proscribing the inscription of any names but his own.<sup>83</sup> That, at least, implies builders once *had* been allowed to sign their works. But if Severus and Celer or Rabirius ever autographed their buildings, the inscriptions (or records of them) do not exist. And the largest and most impressive signature in Rome, inscribed across the front of the Pantheon [Fig. 14],

M. AGRIPPA.L.FCOS.TERTIUM.FECIT

*Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, consul for the third time, built it.*

is just a Hadrianic *homage*. Marcus Agrippa, Augustus’ right-hand man, did not build *this* Pantheon, but an earlier one – and he probably only financed that project, anyway.

As was the case in Mesopotamia, then, the agent who realized the major work of Roman art or architecture was the emperor, his representative, or the Senate and People of Rome: the sculptors or architects themselves are generally invisible. We have no names to associate with the Ara Pacis Augustae or the Prima Porta Augustus, or the Arches of Titus or Constantine, or the spiral friezes on the Columns of Trajan or Marcus Aurelius. No source tells us who built the first Capitolium (besides the Tarquins) or the Forum of Augustus (besides Augustus)<sup>84</sup> or the Colosseum (besides the Flavians) or the Baths of Caracalla (besides Caracalla). And there are few anecdotes about the Roman personalities responsible for these or other monumentally original



14. Inscription on entablature of the Pantheon, Rome. Photo: author.

works. There are, as always, notable exceptions: the architect Gaius Postumius Pollio signed the city gate of Formiae and a temple at Terracina;<sup>85</sup> an Augustan architect (M. Artorius M. L. Primus) signed the stage building of the Theatrum Maius at Pompeii;<sup>86</sup> and in his unusually long signature an architect named Caius Julius Lacer praises himself (over and over) for the fine bridge and Temple of Trajan that he built at Alcántara in Spain in 105 CE:

... The one who completed this mighty  
bridge in all its bulk – Lacer – made that  
sacred place with well-omened sacrifices  
– noble Lacer, who with divine skill made  
a bridge that will endure for all earthly  
eternity. Lacer, who made this bridge,  
dedicated the new temple as well;  
of course, even a single benefaction  
pleases the gods...<sup>87</sup>

But for the most part the Roman artist and architect – especially in Rome itself – did not sign.<sup>88</sup>

In short, the history of Egyptian art and architecture, the history of Near Eastern art and architecture, the history of Etruscan art and architecture, the history even of Roman art and architecture, cannot possibly be written as a history of artists and architects. In contrast, one theoretically could write a history of Greek art and architecture that is *just* a history of the Greek artists

and architects whose names we happen to know, or who have had names assigned to them, from the following categories:

- (a) artists and architects whose names we know *only* from literary sources or inscriptions like decrees or building accounts (Dipoinos, Skyllis, Boularchos, Mnesarkhos, Polygnotos, Apelles, Rhoikos, Theodoros, Libon, Iktinos, Kallikrates, Mnesikles, Polykleitos, Skopas, Euphranor, to list just a few)
- (b) artists whose names we know *only* from signatures, whole or fragmentary (every single Athenian vase-painter who ever signed a pot, every other Greek vase-painter who ever signed a pot, Euthykartides of Naxos, [Poly]medes of Argos, Aristodamos of Argos, Geneleos, Philergos, Gnosis, Epimenes, Dexamenos, Euainetos, Kimon [the *die-engraver*\*], and so on)
- (c) artists whose names we know from *both* literary sources *and* extant signatures (for example, Endoios, Antenor, Kritios and Nesiotes, Kresilas, Praxiteles, Lysippos, Nikodamos of Mainalos, and Boethos of Kalchedon), and
- (d) artists whose “hands” and oeuvres have been identified by a connoisseurship, more than a century old, that has been less than perfect but that has nonetheless proven reliable over all, and who have been given handy sobriquets (such as the Dipylon Master, the Chigi Painter, the Achilles Painter, the Berlin Painter, even the “Theseum Architect”<sup>89</sup>).

One *could* write a history of Greek art focusing on just these artists, but it would not be a very good idea. A history of art and architecture that is just a history of names and solid attributions would be woefully inadequate. It would leave out far too much (the colossal kouros dedicated by Isches at Samos, for example, and the Kritios Boy, the Riace Bronzes, the limestone and marble Goddess from Morgantina, the metopes of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, and all of the sculptures of the Parthenon, with the exception of Pheidias’ chryselephantine Athena, just for starters). And it would minimize what should not be minimized – the varying roles played by politics, belief, function, location, technology, patrons, priesthoods, audience, and other social or cultural factors in the production and reception of art. Still, the simple point remains: the Greeks are exceptional among the peoples of the ancient Mediterranean in the numbers of artists and architects whose names are remembered in the literary tradition or are preserved in inscriptions in stone, in metal, or in paint. It is, once again, true that the overwhelming majority of extant Greek works of art are unsigned. But what is remarkable is that Greek artists began to sign their work almost as soon as the Greeks learned to write; there is from the start an artistic self-consciousness – and an impulse and a freedom to sign – that are rarely seen elsewhere. What is remarkable, in the end, is not that there are so few Greek artists’ signatures, but so many.<sup>90</sup>

## PART TWO

### WHO SIGNED WHAT, WHERE, HOW?



## CHAPTER THREE

### GEMS

THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE TEXT ON THE BASE OF EUTHYKARTIDES' kouros [Pl. 1, Fig. 1] was inscribed by anyone other than Euthykartides himself. That is, EUTHYKARTIDĒS MANETHEKE HO NAHSIOS POIESAS is probably a true signature cut into the stone by Euthykartides himself to take credit for his own dedication, a kouros sculpted with his own hands.<sup>1</sup> But many of the Greek texts that are usually and conventionally called signatures are not, technically, signatures at all.<sup>2</sup> That is, many were written by someone other than the artist, by assistants or collaborators or professional letterers who were employed by someone – either the artist himself or his client – to identify the artist and credit him with the work (this is especially true of sculpture). So, in essence, there are signatures that are genuine autographs, written by the artists who actually made the works, and there are what we shall call proxy-signatures – texts that identify the maker of the work with statements of agency, but that were written by someone else. Another important point is that although Greek artists by no means signed everything (again, they signed only a very small percentage of extant works), they nonetheless could sign just about anything. That is, signatures (autographs or proxies) are found in virtually every genre of Greek art, large or small, in every medium.<sup>3</sup>

The smallest Greek works of art are gems (or seals) – they average less than 3 centimeters across – but what they lack in size they make up for in numbers. There are many hundreds of Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic gems extant

(they are mostly scarabs, scaraboids, and ringstones),<sup>4</sup> but at most only a few dozen – perhaps less than 1 percent – are signed (they are all, necessarily, *integrated signatures*\*).<sup>5</sup> The number is not exact because it is not always clear when a name engraved on a gem is that of the artist or the owner. But one comprehensive study lists five Archaic gem-cutters by name (Epimenes, Syries, Onesimos, Aristoteikhēs, and Anakles).<sup>6</sup> All are very late Archaic: the practice of signing gems apparently does not begin until c. 500 BCE (much later than the earliest signatures on vases or statues). Perhaps the earliest signature is that of the accomplished Epimenes, who engraved a scaraboid in Boston with a youth in a skillful back-three-quarter view restraining an unruly horse [Fig. 15].<sup>7</sup> The two words EPIMĒNES and EPŌIE (this interrupted by a hoof) are written separately around the rim: together they mean *Epimenes made* [*me*, or *it*, is implied]. The letters are small and lightly engraved, but they are neat and clear. In contrast, Syries' roughly contemporary signature on a gem in London (SYRIES EPOIESE) is small and almost illegible. Onesimos' three signatures are not much clearer, and he and Anakles omit *epoie* or *epoiese*, simply writing their names in the nominative case in the field. If these Archaic signatures are shallowly cut and so almost understated, the names of owners, often written in the genitive case – BIONOS (*of Bion*, that is, *I am the property of Bion*), for example, or KREONTIDA EMI (*I am Kreontidas*)<sup>8</sup> – tend to be larger and more deeply cut, and the differences might suggest a reluctance on the part of the gem-cutter either to be too bold in naming himself or to detract from the image with words too conspicuously carved. Still, on a scarab with a magnificent, crouching lioness, the inscription ARISTOTEIKHĒS, usually understood to be an artist's signature, is emphatically cut, and so are other names in the nominative that might also identify artists rather than owners.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, there are some owner's names that are lightly if neatly incised – ERMOTIMO EMI (*I am [the gem] of Ermotimos*) on a scaraboid in Boston, for example, or SĒMONOS (*[the gem] of Semon*) on scarab in Berlin<sup>10</sup> – so any distinctions made between statements of authorship and statements of ownership based on the quality or relative depths of inscription cannot be hard and fast. At all events, even if one counts all the names engraved in the nominative on Archaic gems as the names of artists (thus adding the likes of Stesikrates, Mandronax, Pythonas, and Bryesis to the list), and even if one generously throws in the names of the only two Archaic gem-cutters known to us from ancient literary sources and who might have signed their works (they are Mnesarkhos, father of Pythagoras, and the famous and multitalented Theodoros, both from Samos),<sup>11</sup> the number of Archaic signatures on gems would still be under a dozen.<sup>12</sup>

Half a dozen Classical gem-cutters (more or less) signed their names: Dexamenos of Chios, Sosias, Onatas, Pergamos, Phrygillos, and Olympios appear on one roster.<sup>13</sup> With the exception of the superb and relatively prolific





15. Chalcedony scaraboid signed by Epimenēs, c. 500 BCE. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Francis Bartlett Donation of 1912 (27.677). Photo © Museum of Fine Arts.

Dexamenos (who c. 440 or 430 signed four gems – twice explicitly with EPOIE – and has had others attributed to him), they typically signed lightly. Dexamenos himself usually signs with clarity and force, as he does beneath a flying heron on a gem in St. Petersburg (the integrated signature DEXAMENOS EPOIE KHIOS is written horizontally and *stoikhēdon*\* in the field, which thus must be read simultaneously both as the air through which the bird flies and as a neutral surface that can be neatly inscribed) or over the profile head of a long-nosed, bearded, balding man on a gem found in Attica (now in Boston), signed simply DEXAMENOS EPOIE.<sup>14</sup> The image looks like a true “portrait” (at least it does compared to the stereotypically idealized images of men usually found in High Classical art). But if it is, it is odd that the name of the portrayed is not there.<sup>15</sup> It is there on a blue chalcedony gem in Cambridge [Pl. V], where Dexamenos judiciously understates his name compared to that of the subject and owner – Mika, presumably the woman for whom the gem was cut. The single word MIKĒS ([*the gem*] of Mika) hovers above a scene of a maid, a wreath in her right hand, holding a mirror up to a seated woman who is apparently adjusting her dress (Mika herself): we are looking at a miniaturized version of a kind of scene found in abundance on late 5th-century Athenian vases and funerary stelai.<sup>16</sup> MIKĒS is written larger and is carved more deeply than DEXAMENOS, which almost obediently accommodates itself to the curve of the dentil-like border behind her (on any impression left by the image, both names would appear *retrograde*\*).<sup>17</sup>

The difference in typography suggests the higher status and priority of Mika herself, but the presence of DEXAMENOS nonetheless added prestige to the work (or it would not be there). At all events, this is a rare instance where the names of both patron and artist are there, and where the relationship between them is clear.

If Dexamenos can sign emphatically, other gem cutters can sign wittily. On a late 5th- or early 4th-century scaraboid in London with a Nike erecting a trophy (the image looks like a tiny version of passages on the balustrade of the Temple of Athena Nike on the Athenian Acropolis), Onatas is often thought to have cleverly signed his name, partially, on a furling pennant, but the usual reading of the letters and thus the very reality of a gem-cutter named Onatas have been called into question.<sup>18</sup> Still, whatever the letters mean, they are purposely, almost teasingly, inconspicuous. In the same vein, on a late 5th-century scaraboid in St. Petersburg, Pergamos engraved only the first few letters of his name on the curling flap of a Phrygian cap, as if the rest twisted out of sight [Fig. 16].<sup>19</sup> There is a kind of playfulness here that we shall see again.<sup>20</sup>

By one count, fourteen Hellenistic gem-cutters signed their names – Gelon and Pheidias and Sosis and Onesas and so on; by another, we know the names of thirty-three Hellenistic gem-engravers (though we do not have signed gems from all of them).<sup>21</sup> A precise number is especially hard to reach here, since the chronological and conceptual boundaries between “Hellenistic” and “Roman” are fluid and permeable and, as we have already seen, many ethnic Greek artisans were regularly in the employ of Republican and Imperial Roman patrons – for example, the Daidalos who engraved and signed a portrait of (possibly) T. Quinctius Flamininus in the early 2nd century BCE, or the Greek slave or freedman who at some point acquired the Latin cognomen Rufus (Red) and signed (in Greek) a mid-1st century BCE cameo with Nike (or Victoria) and a chariot.<sup>22</sup> Some might draw the Hellenistic/Roman line at Dioskourides, who could be considered a late Hellenistic gem-engraver until the emperor Augustus commissioned him to make his official signet: at that point, “the end of Hellenistic glyptic was officially sealed” (so to speak).<sup>23</sup> But not a few Hellenistic royals had earlier commissioned artisans to cut their portraits on gems and permitted or encouraged them to include their own names: Nikandros signed an intaglio with a portrait of Berenike II, Queen of Ptolemaic Egypt; Apollonios signed a portrait of Antiochos III; and Nikias signed a profile of Mithridates IV.<sup>24</sup> The signature was clearly a prized feature of these gems, adding prestige. It is worth noting that Alexander the Great decreed that no one but Pyrgoteles – “the greatest master of his art” – could engrave his likeness on gems: none survives, but some of them, too, were undoubtedly signed.<sup>25</sup>

Gems and intaglios had a variety of uses beyond being just beautiful ornaments: they might have been impressed upon wax or clay to seal

documents, declare ownership (and so protect property), or, simply, identify the persons who wore them.<sup>26</sup> There is, in fact, at least one literary instance – a comedy by Menander – in which an engraved and signed ring is a token of identity or recognition and thus a critical plot device.<sup>27</sup> But it is unlikely that gems, engraved or plain, were found among the standard possessions of most Archaic and Classical Greeks: it may mean something that no figure, male or female, on any Athenian Red Figure vase is shown with a ring on his or her finger, and rings are where gems were typically to be found.<sup>28</sup> Jewellery and gems become more common in the late Classical and Hellenistic periods, when, after the expansion of the Greek world under Alexander, a wider variety of precious stones became more readily available.<sup>29</sup> Still, chalcedony, cornelian, amethyst, agate, jasper, green

steatite and so on were expensive, and the gems carved out of them were in every period valuable things – valuable for their rarity and intrinsic worth, for the quality of their engraving, and even for amuletic properties and sentimental attachments. Polykrates, the rich but doomed tyrant of Archaic Samos (c. 535–522 BCE), supposedly prized the emerald and gold ring that Theodoros made for him above all his other possessions, and many gems and seals are listed in the 5th- and 4th-century inventories of the treasures stored in the Parthenon.<sup>30</sup> To wear or use or dedicate a gem or seal was to display one's wealth and power, and so it was in the interest of the élite to commission artists whose skill would express or complement their status. The art of the gem-cutter was thus highly prized and so, apparently, was the gem-cutter himself. Mika did not mind – in fact, she must have welcomed – having Dexamenos' name share the field with her own on the gem that he carved for her [Pl. V]. And gem-engravers were particularly esteemed later in Greek antiquity, when at least a few artists (like Pyrgoteles and Nikandros) were attached to royal courts, and a number of *epigrams*\* collected in the *Greek Anthology* (one goes under no less a name than Plato) admiringly and vividly describe jaspers and amethysts and other gems: they focus on the virtuoso realism of their images and even name the artist



16. Scaraboid signed by Pergamos. St. Petersburg. Drawing after Zazoff 1983, fig. 41c.

himself.<sup>31</sup> Here, the *egocentric*\* gem (probably a work of the mid- or late-1st century BCE) itself speaks:

Tryphon persuaded me, a beryl from India, to become Galene [Calm],  
 And with soft hands he let down my hair.  
 Look at my lips smoothing the moist sea,  
 And my breasts, with which I charm the windless waters.  
 If only the jealous stone would consent – so eager and ready am I –  
 soon you would see me swimming.<sup>32</sup>

The stone that inspired the poem is lost, but Tryphon probably signed it (that is the easiest way to explain how the poet knew who had carved it, and the same artist did sign a storied onyx cameo now in Boston with TRYPHŌN EPOIEI).<sup>33</sup>

Although it remains true that the vast majority of Greek gems are unsigned, and that there is no correlation between signing and quality (there are plenty of unsigned masterpieces),<sup>34</sup> artists' signatures would still have added a certain, even intimate, cachet to such personal, luxury items: signed gems, in other words, might have been especially treasured since the signature documented a special, even prestigious relationship between artist and client. At all events, it is very hard to imagine any Greek gem-cutter or ring-maker – Archaic, Classical, or Hellenistic – turning over his small but precious product to someone else for inscription. The signatures we have (EPIMĒNES EPŌIE and ONESIMOS and DEXAMENOS EPOIE KHIOS and NIKANDROS EPOIEI and so on) are certainly autographs.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COINS

SET INTO PENDANTS, BRACELETS, HOOPS, OR RINGS, ENGRAVED GEMS WERE, again, typically objects of personal adornment and thus of mostly private, individual use. Coins are a different matter. Although it is reasonable to assume that some of the same artists known to have engraved gems also cut *dies*\* (Phrygillos almost certainly did),<sup>1</sup> coins are official, public works minted by or on behalf of the state, and so the name of the issuing city or authority (or an abbreviation for the city or the mint) is the only text that one would reasonably expect to find inscribed on their surfaces.<sup>2</sup> And that is, in fact, what one normally does find on the several million Greek coins estimated to have survived antiquity.<sup>3</sup> ATHE (an abbreviation for “[a coin] of the Athenians”) are the only letters written (next to the goddess’s sacred owl) on the abundant but virtually unchanging coinage of Archaic and Classical Athens;<sup>4</sup> the archaic letter *koppa* (the city’s initial) is invariably found next to Pegasos on the coins of Corinth (Korinthos); NAXION regularly appears on the coins “of the Naxians.” And on Hellenistic coins we often find legends with the names of kings: on an early 3rd-century coin minted at Pergamon, for example, the words BASILEŌS LYSIMAKHOU (“of King Lysimakhos,” ruler of one of the several kingdoms carved out of Alexander the Great’s empire after his death), written vertically, frame a seated Athena on one side (a little Nike is about to put a wreath over the first letter of the king’s name), while a handsome profile head of Alexander (wearing the ram horns of Zeus Ammon) adorns the other.<sup>5</sup>

So coins, despite their size, are appropriate fields for texts. On occasion, those texts included signatures. In particular, there are magnificent coins from Classical Sicily designed by artists whose skills were so much admired that they were, remarkably, allowed to engrave their own names upon them, as if emulating on public works the kind of personal relationship between artist and patron seen on private gems like Mika's [Pl. V]. Now, the practice of signing coins is not unknown elsewhere in the Classical period: around 380 BCE Theodotos engraved dies in Ionia (on the island of Kos or at Klazomenae) and signed them explicitly with the verb EPOIE (*made*);<sup>6</sup> an Apatorios signed 4th-century silver coins for Soloi in Cilicia (he used the verb EGLYPSEN – *engraved [it]*) and a Menetos signed dies for Aspendos in Pamphylia (misspelling the first person E[G]LYPSA – *I have engraved [it]*; a Telephanes (possibly the same man as the Telephanes of Phokaia known to Pliny as a sculptor) cut dies for Pharsalos in Thessaly; the partial names of what appear to be engravers (DA . . . , OLYM . . . , POLYKA . . . ) are known on coins from Elis; and the signature NEUANTOS EPOEI is found on coins from Kydonia on Crete.<sup>7</sup> So, too, signing is not unknown later, in the Hellenistic period: for example, a Menodotos (or Menodoros) and a Sositheos engraved coins for King Lysimakhos during his reign (c. 297 to 281 BCE).<sup>8</sup>

The practice is always rare and sporadic, but it is in the Classical Greek west that the largest concentration of signatures are found. In south Italy Kleudoros and Philistion signed 4th-century coins from Velia; Dossennos (the name is Italic, not Greek) signed coins from Poseidonia (Paestum); the signature MOLOS[SOS] EPOE (*Molossos made it*) appears on coins from Thurii;<sup>9</sup> and Aristoxenos signed early 4th-century coins from both Metapontum and Herakleia.<sup>10</sup> But Sicily is where most coin signatures appear. We have the names (or the first few letters of the names) of some 20 Sicilian engravers, and there are examples from Katane (the names are Choirion, Herakleidas, Prokles, and Euainetos), Kamarina (Exakestidas, Euainetos again, and someone who used the abbreviation Ekhe . . . ), Messana (Simin . . . ), Naxos (Prokles again), Akragas (Myr . . . and Polyai . . . , possibly short-hand for Myron and Polyainos),<sup>11</sup> Himera (Mai . . . ), and, above all, Syracuse, which produced some of the finest coins ever minted, anywhere.<sup>12</sup>

The standard Classical Syracusan coin is the silver *tetradrachm*\* (weighing a little over 17 grams) and most examples follow the same general pattern. On the reverse there is the profile head of Arethusa (the nymph of the freshwater spring on the island of Ortygia) surrounded by four dolphins and (since the sea implied by the dolphins or Arethusa's sometimes flowing hair is not too liquid to be written upon) the word SYRAKOSIŌN (*of the Syracusans*). On the obverse there is a semicircular exergue below (typically filled by dolphins or ears of barley), then a four-horse chariot moving along the exergual line, and then, hovering above the chariot, a flying Nike with a victory wreath.<sup>13</sup>



The formula is, however, open to considerable variation and is over time interpreted differently by artists with distinctive, recognizable styles (which permit the attribution of unsigned coins to known die-engravers).<sup>14</sup> Above all, after 413 BCE or so, the chariot team, which typically had been shown either walking quietly or galloping mechanically in pure profile, charges dynamically, even violently, over the ground line (sometimes surging above it) in a skilled and muscular three-quarter view (at times the horses are even out of control, breaking their reins).<sup>15</sup> This dramatic innovation is almost certainly



17. Syracusan tetradrachm (reverse) signed on Nike's tablet by Euainetos c. 413 BCE. Courtesy Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Coll. L. de Hirsch 601.

the work of Euainetos – the same Euainetos who also cut and signed dies for Katane and Kamarina, apparently in the same period that he worked at Syracuse.<sup>16</sup> But this peripatetic and prolific engraver is only one of nine artists known to have signed Syracusan dies. The other eight are Sosion, Eumenos, Euarkhidas, Phrygillos, Kimon, Eukleidas, Parme . . . , and someone who signed one die (and one die alone) Euth.<sup>17</sup>

These highly skilled craftsmen (who must have been blessed with very keen eyesight even if they were aided by some kind of magnifying lens) surely engraved many more dies than just the ones that bear their names.<sup>18</sup> That is, like most Greek artists in every genre (as we shall see often enough), they signed only a very small percentage of their total production: for every five thousand or even ten thousand dies that were cut, we have, it has been estimated, only one that is signed.<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, two different artists sometimes engraved dies that were used for the obverse and reverse of the same coin: on a tetradrachm of c. 413–406 BCE, for example, the first few letters of Phrygillos's name are written below a profile head on one side, and EUTH . . . is written next to the sea monster Skylla on the other,<sup>20</sup> while on other tetradrachms it is EUTH . . . and EUM[ENOS] or EUAINETOS and EUMENOS that appear on opposite sides [Figs. 17, 18]. Some of these artists may have collaborated, but some may have cut their dies independently, unaware that their work, and their identities, would be paired in the mint.<sup>21</sup>

At all events, these artists all did their work in the very late 5th or very early 4th centuries: this “Era of the Signing Masters” seems to have begun only in or after 413 and ended (for the most part) by c. 400 BCE.<sup>22</sup> This tight clustering



of signatures, in other words, is chronological as well as regional and was, one would think, somehow bound to the mixed and complex historical fortunes of Syracuse, the dominant Greek city on the island. Syracuse had sided with Sparta and its allies during the Peloponnesian War, for example, and though it was itself nearly captured by an Athenian naval force in 414 (during what is known, from the Athenian perspective, as the “Sicilian Expedition”), it won a decisive victory over the ill-fated Athenian armada in its great harbor the next year. There was, however, no rest from hostilities. After 413 Syracuse resumed its own campaigns against the rival cities of Katane and Messana, sent an expeditionary force of its own into the Aegean, and soon found itself the target of the powerful Carthaginians, who in the years after 410 sacked city after city in Sicily (taking Akragas in 406). In 405, once democratic Syracuse fell under the despotic rule of Dionysios I, who at first concluded an unfavorable peace treaty with the Carthaginians – Syracuse literally lost a lot of ground – but then in several campaigns fought over a couple of decades managed to defend the city from them, and eventually restored and improved the city’s fortunes (he ruled until 367 BCE). It was probably under Dionysios that gold *dekadrachms*\* like those signed by Kimon were first minted, and it is no coincidence that one of his first acts as tyrant was to double the wages of his Italic and Celtic mercenaries: the large denomination silver and gold coins went to the mercenaries, while average Syracusans made do with smaller denomination bronze ones.<sup>23</sup> Now, it may seem paradoxical or counterintuitive that it was the tumultuous and difficult last years of the 5th century that saw the production of such brilliant Syracusan coinage, much of it signed by or attributable to known engravers. But pent-up demand for new coinage (frustrated during the struggle against the Athenians) may have been released after the victory of 413; large amounts of silver known to have been taken from six thousand Athenian prisoners of war would have provided the initial resources necessary for the job;<sup>24</sup> and perhaps, given political unrest and uncertainty even under Dionysios, the state allowed private ateliers under superb die-cutters to assume control over minting operations. That would have meant contests for contracts. The culture or ethos of late 5th-century Syracuse was, perhaps, particularly agonistic – the word *ATHLA* (*prizes*) even appears in the exergues of some dekadrachms below galloping racing chariots.<sup>25</sup> And so the Era of the Signing Masters may have been generated, at least in part, by officially sponsored competitions between die-engravers vying to outdo one another, eager to declare their identities and so take credit for their skill.<sup>26</sup>

As on gems, signatures on Sicilian coins (they are inherently “integrated signatures”) can be whole or partial, and they can be relatively neat and clear or understated and hard to read – sometimes all on the same coin. On a silver tetradrachm of around or after 413 BCE, for example, Euainetos engraved just the first four letters of his name (EUAI) – and they are barely legible – on

the body of a dolphin leaping in front of the mouth of Arethusa on one side, while on the other his signature is longer, easily readable, and prominently displayed: the Nike flying above the chariot holds a wreath from which hangs a tablet clearly engraved with (almost) his whole name (EUAINETO) [cf. Fig. 17].<sup>27</sup> The name is almost all there again on a silver dekadrachm of c. 406/5 BCE, though EUAINE [TOS] appears lightly and discreetly beneath Arethusa's head.<sup>28</sup>



18. Syracusan tetradrachm (obverse) signed below the head of Arethusa by Eumenos, c. 413 BCE. Courtesy Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Coll. L. de Hirsch 601.

Other artists, like Eumenos, engrave their names clearly [Fig. 18]. But the Sicilian die-engraver can be clever about it (as sly as the gem-cutters who practically concealed their names or initials in their designs), not so much declaring his name as insinuating it. On the obverse of a tetradrachm of c. 413 BCE Euainetos signed his name microscopically on the exergual line below the chariot: we can only wonder how many Syracusans would have noticed it.<sup>29</sup> On the reverse of a Syracusan silver tetradrachm of c. 406/405 BCE, Eukleidas's signature is almost lost in the rich ornament and crests of Athena's helmet, but it is there, hiding in plain sight [Pl. VI].<sup>30</sup> On a silver tetradrachm from Akragas (c. 409–406 BCE), Polyai[nos] cut his name, in tiny letters, into the lowest feather of an eagle devouring a hare: it takes a sharp eye or a magnifying glass to find it.<sup>31</sup> The influential Kimon often signed his short name in full (on the headband of a facing Arethusa, for example, or on the side of a dolphin leaping just below her profile), but, like Euainetos, he sometimes wrote it in miniscule on the line of the exergue.<sup>32</sup> And on a silver dekadrachm of c. 400 BCE [Fig. 19] the first two letters of KI[MON] appear on a profile Arethusa's headband while the rest are seemingly, fictively, lost beneath her wavy hair (very much as the end of Pergamos' name disappears around the curve of the Phrygian flap on his gem in St. Petersburg, Fig. 16).<sup>33</sup> Minute, inconspicuous, partial, and coy these signatures may be, but it is astonishing that they are there at all, and it is difficult to maintain either that the artisans who wrote them – integrating their own names with the names and emblems of the cities for which they worked – were held in low regard or that their works were “anonymous and impersonal.” Some may fruitlessly quibble over whether these die-engravers should be called “artists” or just “craftsmen.” The answer depends, of course,

on what one thinks an “artist” is, and there is more than one opinion.<sup>34</sup> But the signatures here, as elsewhere in Greek art, are measures at least of the esteem in which their signers held themselves, and of the prestige that redounded upon the city that employed them, allowing its name to be paired with theirs.

If there were rules determining which dies could be signed and which not, or when signatures could be written fully and when partially, or which could be strongly cut and overtly displayed and which subtly cut and concealed, we do not know them (and it is worthwhile pointing out that, although Sicilian coins may bear signatures, no known Classical Sicilian sculpture does – on Sicily the impulse to sign is limited by genre).<sup>35</sup> In the end, the conceit of signing one’s name only to abbreviate it or virtually hide it in a headband or in the ornaments of a helmet or on an eagle’s wing is charming but curious. What, after all, was the point of signing something with a name that is not all there or that is deliberately hard to find, unless the practice reflects, paradoxically, not only the impulse to sign and take credit for the work but also a reluctance to be too bold in declaring one’s identity on a public instrument issued by or in the name of the state? Pride may be tempered by prudence here. But perhaps the real motive was to involve the owner of the coin by tantalizing him, by encouraging him to complete the name or extract it from the image, evoking an almost playful act of discovery that ultimately emphasizes the artist’s name and the brilliance of his work rather than understates them.

It also remains difficult to say why only a few Classical Greek cities or city-states (17 or 18, by one count) allowed signatures of any kind on their coins while the great majority (many hundreds) did not. The notion that western Greeks simply appreciated the numismatic art and artist more than mainland or eastern Greeks may well be right, but it merely gives rise to more questions. What, for example, explains the signatures from outliers such as Klazomenae, Kydonia, or Pharsalos, extremely rare and virtually isolated as they are? And why did graphomaniac Athens, whose artists wrote so much in other media, completely exclude signatures from its pure, widely circulated, economically powerful, but iconographically monotonous, silver coinage? The best guess is that its very monotony and predictability reinforced its dependability as the “international” monetary standard: one knew what one had with an Athenian coin (even the ones that were sloppily produced, as many were), and so individual interpretations or variations of the standard formula (old-fashioned head of Athena on the obverse, sacred owl on the reverse) would be discouraged for economic reasons.

Still, it is clear that Sicilian cities like Syracuse and Katane and Akragas were especially *proud* to have a select group of artists cut often brilliant dies for their official currency; that reputation, historical events, and, perhaps, competitions, took some of these die-cutters (like Euainetos) to more than one city; and that some, during a few years at the end of the 5th century, were permitted or



Fig. 19. Syracusan dekadrachm signed on Arethusa's headband by Kimon; c. 400 BCE. Courtesy Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Coll. L. de Hirsch 596.

encouraged to treat public works as instruments of personal promotion by putting their names to them (for all the turbulence of the late 5th century, the Syracusans must have basked a little in the silver and golden glow their masterpieces emitted). Now, it is possible that names on some coins denote ateliers rather than individual artists. But for the most part, as in the case of gems, it is difficult to see how the signatures on these coins, which bear on surfaces less than 3 or 4 centimeters across some of the finest of all Greek relief sculptures, can be anything but (reproducible) autographs.<sup>36</sup>

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ARCHITECTURE

IF GEM-CUTTERS AND DIE-ENGRAVERS NECESSARILY WROTE SMALL, MASONS and builders could write big. There is no shortage of inscriptions (usually dedications) on Greek walls, and they are especially common and conspicuous in the Hellenistic period, when royals were eager to promote themselves and their *philotimia*\* (munificence). On Delos, for example, Philip V of Macedon built (c. 210 BCE) a great portico leading to the entrance of the sanctuary of Apollo and the dedication *Philip, King of the Macedonians, son of King Demetrius, to Apollo* was writ large on its architrave: no one could mistake (or forget) the benefactor. Similarly, *BASILEUS EUMENĒS ATHĒNAI NIKĒPHORŌI* (*King Eumenes to Athena Bearer of Victory*) is inscribed across the entablature of the gateway to the goddess' *temenos* at Pergamon (early 2nd century BCE) [Fig. 20]. And the very long dedication of another Pergamene king appeared on the architrave of the very long stoa built to define the east side of the Athenian Agora between 159 and 138 BCE: the inscription is fragmentary, but it began *King Attalos, son of King Attalos and Queen Apollonis, [dedicated] the stoa* and then seems to have added something about a statue and a fountain before concluding *to the demos of the Athenians*.<sup>1</sup> Other Hellenistic examples abound.

But the practice of chiseling words directly into buildings was an old one, and a wide range of Archaic and Classical Greek structures had inscriptions of various kinds written upon them.<sup>2</sup> A list of high officials known as *demiourgoi* was evidently inscribed on the door-post of an early 6th-century building on the acropolis at Argos, for example.<sup>3</sup> Treasuries at Olympia and Delphi



20. Dedicatory inscription on the propylon to Athena's sanctuary at Pergamon, in Berlin. Early 2nd century BCE. Photo: author.

seem to have been commonly inscribed with a dedication or just a label. Around 550 BCE, at Delphi, the people of Knidos seem to have inscribed their treasury with a (very fragmentary) dedication to Pythian Apollo,<sup>4</sup> and there is one block from another Delphic treasury (or some other structure) inscribed with KORIN . . . , the start of the word *Corinthians* or *of the Corinthians*.<sup>5</sup> At Olympia, the word MEG[AR]EŌN (*of the Megarians*) appears centrally on the architrave of a Doric treasury built at Olympia around 520–510; the word was actually inscribed long after the treasury was built,<sup>6</sup> but it is undoubtedly a late instance of a long-standing practice [Fig. 21]. And according to an inscription Pausanias read somewhere on the treasury closest to the Olympic stadium, it and the statues inside were dedicated by the people of Gela.<sup>7</sup> War memorials were inscribed, too: perhaps the most conspicuous of all the dedicatory inscriptions at Delphi is written in large, handsome letters on the stylobate of the early 5th-century Stoa of the Athenians, likely built to commemorate Athenian victories over the Persians and to display the spoils of war.<sup>8</sup> It is not clear what kind of monument bore it – a low, limestone balustrade, perhaps – but a long, thin, horizontal inscription from the Aphaia sanctuary on Aegina informs us that a temple (*oikos*) of the goddess was built (along with a new altar, ivory additions to the statue, and a new precinct wall) during the years when Theoitas was priest (c. 575–550 BCE) [Fig. 22].<sup>9</sup> A sacred text (or, perhaps, a record of payment) was inscribed (retrograde) on the abacus of a Doric column capital from the late 6th-century Temple of Athena at Assos.<sup>10</sup> Altars, large or





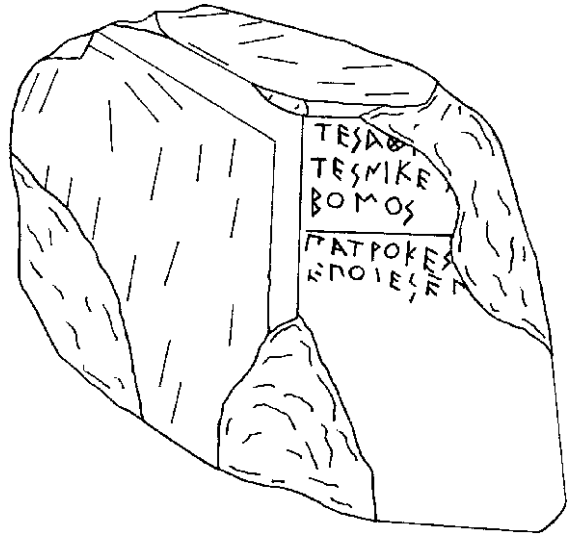
21. Inscription on façade of the Megarian Treasury, Olympia. Photo: author.



22. Inscription concerning the building of the first Temple of Aphaia, Aegina, during the priesthood of Theoitias; c. 575–550. Aegina Museum. Photo: author.



small, were themselves frequently (if briefly) inscribed, too. A few short lines on a mid-6th-century limestone altar to Athena Nike on the Acropolis – the stone is less than half a meter long and just over half a meter high – tell us that PATROK [L]EDES EPOIESEN, but in this case the ambiguous verb is usually thought to mean “caused it to be made” or “set it up” – that is, Patrokledes did not actually create the altar with his own hands but arranged for its installation and dedicated it [Fig. 23].<sup>11</sup> According to



23. Drawing of Archaic altar of Athena Nike, with dedication (?) of Patrokledes; c. 550 BCE. From Hurwit 1999, fig. 75.

Thucydides, the Altar of the Twelve Gods in the Athenian Agora (522/1 BCE) originally carried the dedication of Peisistratos, son of Hippias, though a later renovation erased it.<sup>12</sup> And a single line on the grandiose marble altar of Apollo at Delphi (c. 500) reads *The Chians [dedicated] to Apollo the altar*. Boundary stones were also inscribed: HOROS EIMI TES AGORAS (*I am the boundary of the Agora*), reads the inscription found on three stones set up to mark the limits of Athens’ new civic center around 500 BCE. And we are told that in the late 6th century Hipparchos, son of Peisistratos, set up road markers half way between the Altar of the Twelve Gods in the Agora and the Attic demes inscribed with such immortal aphorisms as *A reminder of Hipparchos, this: do not deceive a friend*.<sup>13</sup> Words were all over the place.

Archaic and Classical temples, too, could carry dedications or even labels identifying figures depicted in their architectural decoration. BASILEUS KROISOS ANETHEKE was inscribed on some of the columns of the Temple of Artemis at Ephesos after the wealthy but ill-fated Lydian king paid for its rebuilding c. 550.<sup>14</sup> A century later, In the face of political opposition to his grandiose building program on the Acropolis, Perikles threatened to “make the inscription of the dedications [that is, the Parthenon and Propylaia and so on] in my own name” instead of the people’s.<sup>15</sup> He may have been bluffing, and the whole story is probably apocryphal anyway, but the anecdote at least suggests that there was nothing strange about finding dedicatory inscriptions by individuals either directly on Classical buildings or inside of them, on stelai. As for labeling architectural sculptures or terracottas, figures on the terracotta panels that were somehow inserted into the fabric of Temple of Apollo at Thermon (c. 625 BCE) were identified with painted inscriptions



24. Painted terracotta panel from Temple of Apollo, Thermon, c. 625 BCE. The figure of Khelidon is labeled (retrograde). Photo: author.

(*Khelidon*, for instance) [Fig. 24],<sup>16</sup> and the practice continued on such works as the terracotta metopes from early 6th-century Kalydon, the limestone metopes from the mid-6th-century Sikyonian Treasury at Delphi (where Orpheus, Kastor, and Polydeukes were among those named), and the north and east friezes of the late 6th-century marble Siphnian Treasury at Delphi (where gods, giants, and heroes were identified with labels painted in red against a deep blue background or along the groundline).<sup>17</sup> Other labels could be engraved in stone. In the west pediment of the late Archaic Temple of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria, for example, a word with the letters . . . ESE . . . was cut into the wheel of Theseus's chariot, and if the letters do not belong to EPOIESE in a signature, they belong to the name THESEUS.<sup>18</sup> On the architrave below the technically unusual and poorly preserved metopes over the porches of the mid-4th-century Temple of Athena Alea at Tegea, names such as *Auge* and *Telephos* were very helpfully cut.<sup>19</sup> The practice is not common, but it is seen once again in the Hellenistic period, when names carefully inscribed on the moldings above and below the great frieze of the Pergamon Altar (and occasionally in the field beside them, [Fig. 25]) identified the gods and giants at war. It would have been difficult to tell the most of the players – the giants and even many of the less familiar gods enlisted for the battle – without an engraved scorecard.<sup>20</sup>

But if Greeks of all periods were used to reading texts on the surfaces of all kinds of structures, they did not very often have the opportunity to read the signatures of architects (“builders” might be the better word, since “architect”



25. Detail of Gigantomachy frieze, Pergamon Altar (Pergamon Museum, Berlin). The figure of Ge (Earth) is labeled with an inscription in the field beside her. Photo: author.

implies a kind of professional training that in the Archaic and Classical periods did not really exist).<sup>21</sup> There are the remains of nearly one hundred monumental temples left from the ancient Greek world, and we know the names of some of the men who built them. In fact, we know the names of dozens of Greek master builders, contractors, planners, and civil engineers: Theodoros, Rhoikos, Eupalinos, Mandrokles, Khersiphron, Metagenes, Hippodamos, Iktinos, Kallikrates, Mnesikles, Philo, Theodotos, Deinokrates, and Pytheos, to name a few.<sup>22</sup> But we know their names not from extant signatures inscribed on their buildings but from inscribed decrees authorizing construction, from accounts recording state expenditures, and, above all, from the usual literary suspects – ancient sources such as Vitruvius, Pliny, Plutarch, Pausanias, and Strabo.

There are a few exceptions. One is possibly found on the top step of the early 6th-century, heavy-set, peripteral Temple of Apollo at Syracuse, where there is a badly worn but apparently later 6th-century inscription that reads something like:

*Kleo[men]es, the son of Knidieidas, made [epoiese] it to Apollo, and Epikles the columns, beautiful works.*

or, perhaps:

*Kleo[men]es, the son of Knidieidas, made [epoiese] it to Apollo, and Epikles, son of Tyletas, finished it, beautiful works.*

There is a lot about this inscription that is controversial. It is not even clear whether it names one man or two: *Epikles* could be a misreading. And so it is possible to read it yet another way:

*Kleo[men]es, the son of Knidieidas, made [epoiese] it to Apollo and the famous columns, beautiful works.*

In two readings of the inscription, then, the columns come in for special praise: they should, since they were sharply tapering monoliths 7.98 meters tall and there were two rows of them at the front of the building, which is unusual for a Doric temple. But particularly problematic is the meaning of the verb *epoiese* and thus the role of Kleomenes. If the word here means “made” in the sense of “designed and built,” then Kleomenes can be considered the temple’s “architect,” and the text is a proxy signature like other proxy signatures (since the inscription is considerably later than the temple, it is not likely to be Kleomenes’ autograph, and a professional letterer would likely have cut it anyway). But the word (as we saw in the case of Patrokledes’ altar, Fig. 23) can also mean “caused to be made,” and so Kleomenes may have been charged by the city with financing or overseeing the project. In that case, Kleomenes would be more of a donor or liturgist, and the text would be in the nature of a dedication, despite the absence of an unambiguous word like *anetheke* (“dedicated”). In either case, though, Kleomenes is taking (rather, being given) credit for something. Whether he was the actual builder of the temple or its *epistates* (the supervisor of its construction), the text gives him the credit for one of the earliest peripteral temples in the Greek world – one particularly distinguished by its impressive columns – and proudly puts his name to it. Again, since the inscription appears to be later than the temple itself, it may be more of an attribution or label, whatever *epoiese* means. But, in the end, Kleomenes seems to have been more than just the dedicant: he was the force behind the temple’s construction. And if he was its builder in the usual sense of the word, the inscription may be a post facto proxy signature after all.<sup>23</sup>

The signatures of other Archaic or Classical builders, however, are very few. In the second half of the 6th century two Greeks built an Ionic shrine, possibly in the form of a baldacchino, at the site of Biga in Mysia (in Asia Minor just beyond the boundaries of the Greek world). Their names were inscribed on one of the columns but are mostly lost: one is called the son of someone whose name ended in *-thenos* and the other is called “the son of Leukippos” (and he stresses he built the temple with his own hands). The 6th-century team of Eurykles and Kharmophilos built a short bridge at Neokhori on Samos and signed their names (explicitly calling themselves *tektones*, “builders”) in the natural rocky ledge above.<sup>24</sup> On the acropolis of Thasos, a mason autographed the late 6th-century city wall *Parmenon made me*, unless he was just taking credit for the one block on which the inscription appears, in which case



26. City wall of Thasos, with signature of the mason Parmenon; late 6th century BCE. Photo courtesy Marya Fisher.

the (rather sloppy) signature would be more of a graffito than an official text, and Parmenon more of a humble stoneworker than an “architect” – a common laborer, a *banausos*, who nonetheless refused anonymity [Fig. 26].<sup>25</sup> And around 330 BCE a presumably very rich Leonidas took credit for the huge hotel distinguished visitors could enjoy just beyond the southwest corner of the precinct of Zeus at Olympia with an inscription (apparently engraved at least twice on the building’s architrave) that in one restored version reads:

LEŌNIDĒS LEŌTOU NAXIOS EPOI[ĒSE KAI ANETHĒKE DII  
OLYMPIŌ]

*Leonidas, son of Leotos, a Naxian, made [and dedicated this to Olympian Zeus].*<sup>26</sup>

As in the case of Kleomenes’ claim on the stylobate of the temple of Apollo at Syracuse, EPOIĒSE may mean “caused to be made [or built]” rather than “built,” but if ANETHĒKE was indeed paired with it in the text, the distinction between “making” and “dedicating” was intentionally emphasized, and Leonidas would seem to have played the dual role of donor and builder.<sup>27</sup>

But perhaps the most famous, monumental, and controversial of all architectural “signatures” was, as we might expect, Hellenistic. It appeared somewhere on the multistoried, white limestone lighthouse (or Pharos) built at Alexandria c. 290–280 BCE: at 120 to 140 meters high, this canonical wonder of the ancient world was the tallest Greek building ever constructed. Not much of the



structure remains, of course, though some blocks have reportedly been found beneath the waters of the port. But there are important ancient and medieval descriptions of the building and the text it bore. According to the peripatetic geographer Strabo (writing in the late 1st century BCE or early 1st CE), an inscription (possibly in large bronze letters) stated merely that TOUTON D'ANETHEKE SOSTRATOS KNIDIOS (*Sostratos of Knidos dedicated this*) on behalf of mariners. But there is another, more colorful passage in Lucian (who apparently spent some time in Egypt around 160 or 170 CE):

Consider how the great architect of Knidos acted. After constructing the tower on Pharos, the mightiest and most beautiful building ever . . . he inscribed his own name inside the stones, plastered it over with gypsum till it was hidden, and inscribed over that the name of the king of the day, knowing that, as actually happened, the letters would very soon fall away along with the plaster to reveal “Sostratos of Knidos, son of Dexiphanes, in dedication to the Savior Gods on behalf of the seafarers.” So too he kept his eyes not on those times or his own brief life, but on today and eternity, as long as the tower stands and his craftsmanship survives.<sup>28</sup>

Strabo and Lucian agree, then, that the inscription itself stated only that Sostratos was the dedicator. But it is unlikely that Sostratos could have borne the great expense of the project – an estimated 800 talents – all by himself (even if he was “the friend of kings,” as Strabo says), and so the precise meaning of *anetheke* (“dedicated”) in this context is called into question. Besides, Lucian calls Sostratos “the great architect of Knidos” and has no doubts about who actually constructed the tower (it was, he says, the product of Sostratos’ impressive craftsmanship). Now, as a source Lucian is often idiosyncratic, he is prone to cynicism and parody, and his anecdote about the Pharos is suspect on other grounds (the bit about Sostratos’ clever concealment of his name beneath the plaster, though it almost seems a monumentalization of the coy conceit of some gem-cutters and die-engravers [cf. [Fig. 16](#), [Pl. VI](#)], must be apocryphal). But there is no question that Sostratos was indeed an architect or engineer: that is confirmed by an epigram of Posidippos that may also have been inscribed on the lighthouse (it says explicitly that the Pharos “was erected by Sostratos”), by Pliny (who says Sostratos was the first to build a portico supported on piers), and by Lucian in another work, where Sostratos is ranked beside Archimedes as a great engineer.<sup>29</sup> All in all, then, Sostratos was almost certainly the architect of the Pharos as well as the one who ostensibly offered it to the Savior Gods. And it may not be beside the point that as a native of Knidos Sostratos would have had ample opportunity to study the Pharos’s only real antecedent: the huge mid-4th century Mausoleion at Halikarnassos (just 40 kilometers away from Knidos as the crow flies), another soaring wonder of the ancient world. Still, a dedication is not a signature. If Lucian and Strabo

cite the inscription on the Pharos accurately, it did not specifically include a word for “made” or “built:” it credited Sostratos with the dedication but not the actual construction of it. Why it did not explicitly do so we cannot know. But perhaps when a renowned architect dedicated something, it was understood that he also built it, and so *anetheke* might have been interpreted more broadly than usual.<sup>30</sup>

If, then, the list of known Greek builders is relatively long, the list of extant or recorded architectural signatures is very short. Still, it includes both autographs and proxies, both the assertions of simple masons like Parmenon [Fig. 26] and (possibly) of sophisticated architects of skyscrapers like Sostratos. The dearth of signatures might, of course, be an accident of preservation: had we more standing walls, we might have more of them. But it is more likely that the signatures of builders (and even the dedications of donors) were normally regarded as inappropriate additions to the fabric of, say, temples and treasuries that were sacred, public, corporate efforts, where the contribution of one man should not be emphasized over any other and where the process of building was not so much the act of an individual with an overarching vision but one involving scores, even hundreds, of stonemasons and other craftsmen working within received traditions in a civic enterprise.



## CHAPTER SIX

## WALL- AND PANEL-PAINTING

IF ARCHITECTS ONLY OCCASIONALLY SIGNED THE WALLS OF THE BUILDINGS they built, painters often combined words and images on the plastered walls they painted (or the painted wooden panels and *pinakes*\* that were hung on them).<sup>1</sup> Sometimes they wrote labels identifying their figures (the practice, according to Pliny, was nearly as old as drawing itself, and it endured to the end of Greek painting).<sup>2</sup> Sometimes they wrote dedications.<sup>3</sup> And sometimes they signed their work, often metrically in the form of *epigrams*.\* It is likely that at least some of the earliest painters we hear about – Boularchos, for example, who painted a famous *Battle of the Magnetes* in the late 8th or, more likely, the early 7th century – signed their work: it is hard to know how else much later commentators like Pliny could have known their names.<sup>4</sup> But the classic example is Classical: Polygnotos' *Ilioupersis* ("Troy Sacked") found within the Knidian Lesche (Clubhouse) at Delphi, which should probably be dated to the late 460s (and so to the Early Classical period).<sup>5</sup>

The painting was probably a fresco covering the interior walls of the eastern half of the building (though an argument could be made that it filled a series of wooden panels affixed to the walls). It was large (about 24 meters long and about 2 meters high) and was populated by some 70 half-life-size Greeks and Trojans shown in the immediate aftermath of the sack of the citadel: the wall of Troy is being knocked down, the dead still lie on the field, Trojan women are assembled in mourning, Greeks are preparing to sail home, and so on. Not a brushstroke survives, of course, but the painting is fortunate

in having been seen and described in great detail by Pausanias, from whom we can confidently gather that the figures were distributed up and down the wall on at least two levels of uneven terrain.<sup>6</sup> By eliminating the single, artificial groundline (the almost universal method of organizing images before him), Polygnotos effectively changed the way the world was represented in two dimensions (and thus influenced the way the world was actually seen in three), and this innovation (as well as his talent for representing *ethos* and *pathos*, character and emotion) made him a seminal figure in the development of ancient art. The Delphic Amphiktyony (a league of neighboring cities pledged to maintain the cult of Apollo) held him in high enough regard to award him free food and lodging for life. And in Athens he reportedly entered the inner circle of the conservative politician and general Kimon (openly living in sin with Kimon's sister) and painted panels in several Athenian buildings (above all the Stoa Poikile, or Painted Colonnade, at the north end of the Agora) for free: a grateful Athens bestowed citizenship upon him in return. It is not clear whether his time in Athens preceded or followed his stint at Delphi. But Polygnotos was honored wherever he went, and Plutarch specifically excludes him from the ranks of *banausoi* – not so much because of his artistry, it is true, but because he did not work under contract for pay.<sup>7</sup> Still, even if the Amphiktyony, the Athenians, and Plutarch recognized him less for his originality than for his munificence, it was his talent and reputation that put him in a position to display his *philotimia*\* in the first place. Broad generalizations like “Greek artists were held in low esteem” will not do here.

The practice of labeling figures in independent panel- or wall-paintings, again, went back a long way [cf. Fig. 24]. And Polygnotos seems to have labeled almost every figure in his *Ilioupersis* (which is why Pausanias specifically calls our attention to it when a boy seated beside a tent near the ship of Menelaus is *not* identified).<sup>8</sup> Given the abundant handwriting on the wall, it is no surprise that there was a signature there, too – though this is among the most problematic of all Greek signatures. At the very end of his long description of the *Ilioupersis* (just before he begins to describe Polygnotos' painting of the Underworld, or *Nekyia*, on the other side of the Lesche), Pausanias quotes an elegiac couplet written on the wall:

GRAPSE POLYGNŌTOS THASIOS GENOS AGLAOPHŌNTOS  
HUIOS PERTHOMENĒN ILIOU AKROPOLIN.

*Polygnotos, Thasian by birth, Aglaophon's  
son, painted the sacking of Ilion's akropolis.*<sup>9</sup>

The poetry is hardly immortal, but the lines, Pausanias informs us, were composed by Simonides, who is. It is not clear how Pausanias knew. Unless the name “Simonides” itself appeared beside the couplet – in which case we

would have a signature of a signature – Pausanias must be reporting an old popular tradition reported to him by a guide.

Simonides of Keos was one of the leading poets of the late Archaic and Early Classical periods. He was the first poet to write for pay (or so we are told) and he was an equal opportunity poet, with clients ranging from cities to individuals, from tyrants to democrats, from athletes to, apparently, artists. He worked in a wide variety of genres as well (dithyrambs, epinician odes, dirges, hymns, elegies, and epigrams). He thus wrote long poems and he wrote short poems, and so the couplet he allegedly composed for Polygnotos to use as his signature would not have been too small a commission (for the famously avaricious Simonides no commission was too small). The problem is that the poet, born around 556 BCE, is said to have lived for 90 years (ancient traditions tend to round off numbers like that). Having spent the last years of his life in Sicily, he probably died at Akragas, where his tomb could be seen, in 468 (or 466, if ancient tradition was right after all). It is in any case difficult to reconcile his chronology with the likely late 460s date of the Polygnotan paintings and signature in the Knidian Lesche at Delphi.<sup>10</sup> But Simonides wrote a lot of epigrams, and so a lot of epigrams he did not write could be (and were) attributed to him with plausibility by later anthologists eager to hang a large collection upon the name of a great poet. In the end, it is likely that the couplet Pausanias quotes is not genuinely Simonidean but was attracted to his oeuvre (as if to a magnet) sometime in the six hundred years between the painting of the Lesche and Pausanias' visit – and probably early in that period rather than later. As if the name of Polygnotos were not enough, the popular ascription of the epigram to the renowned Simonides would have added still more prestige to the wall.

Polygnotos was an obviously literate artist who seems to have drawn upon a number of poetic sources (including poems by Stesichoros and Lescheos as well as Homer) for at least some of the details in his *Ilioupersis* and for many of the names in his large cast of characters (though Pausanias also notes that the painter invented some scenes and the names of many characters unknown in poetry, like the Elastos whom Neoptolemos has killed, “whoever he may be”).<sup>11</sup> It may well be that the figures, labels, and epigram were all retouched or repainted at some point or points in the six centuries before Pausanias saw them.<sup>12</sup> But if the attribution of the epigram to Simonides is fairly denied, there is little to prevent the conclusion that the poem was the painter's own composition – not an authentic Simonides, but an authentic Polygnotos in the Simonidean mode.<sup>13</sup> Whoever composed the couplet, there is no reason to doubt that it was written in Polygnotos' own hand upon the completion of the fresco – that, in other words, it was an autograph. Incidentally, there is no indication that Polygnotos signed his other painting in the Lesche, the *Nekyia*.<sup>14</sup>

As it happens, two other epigrams that functioned as painters' signatures are also ascribed to Simonides:

*Iphion the Corinthian painted this. There is no fault  
in his hand, since the work far exceeds the expectation.*

and

*Kimon painted the door to the right;  
the door on the right as you leave, Dionysios.<sup>15</sup>*

Iphion's signature is preserved in a second epigram that tradition did not ascribe to Simonides:

*Iphion painted me with his own hand, whom water  
from Peirene once nourished.<sup>16</sup>*

That is all we hear about Iphion and that, paradoxically, is a very good reason to believe both epigrammatic signatures are authentic, if not Simonidean (why forge the signature of so obscure an artist?). In any case, Kimon may well have been his rival, since he seems to have implicitly responded to Iphion's immodesty in another (non-Simonidean) signature:

*Kimon painted this, not without skill. But in every work  
there is fault, which even the hero Daïdalos could not escape.<sup>17</sup>*

What door or doors Kimon and Dionysios painted, and with what figures or scenes, we do not know. But Kimon is apparently the innovative, late Archaic Kimon of Kleonai, whom Pliny credits with inventing (among other things) *katagrapha* (foreshortened views), and Dionysios may be the Early Classical Dionysios of Kolophon, who was a contemporary and imitator of Polygnotos (and who was known for painting only human beings). Whether Simonides composed the first of Iphion's epigrams or not, that and the other look like true signatures that may well have been transcribed by the painter himself (though where and on what we again do not know). But if both Kimon and Dionysios can be considered the long-lived Simonides' rough contemporaries – Kimon, certainly, Dionysios, barely – it is unlikely that they themselves were contemporaries, and that makes their epigram more problematic. Obviously, a signature by a late Archaic Kimon should not foretell the coming of an Early Classical Dionysios. So, either the epigram was commissioned and transcribed by Dionysios, who graciously gave the earlier Kimon his due, or it is merely an attribution of uncertain date – a mere statement of fact about two painted doors (or perhaps the two jambs of the same door), somewhere.<sup>18</sup> In that case, it was not a signature at all, but a label or graffito.

Our sources are silent about any other wall- or panel-painter's signature from the early or mid-5th century. And this is surprising – not only because

Polygnotos' career was a productive one (if he signed one painting, he might be expected to have signed others),<sup>19</sup> but also because there were other Early and High Classical painters of great renown (some of whom were his collaborators). Pausanias saw more than one Polygnotos hanging in the northwest wing of the Propylaia (the Pinakotheke, or Picture Gallery), and since the Propylaia was built between 437 and 432 BCE (presumably well after Polygnotos' death), the paintings must have been panels moved there from somewhere else. The easiest way for Pausanias to have known that Polygnotos was the artist would have been if they were signed or labeled, and just because Pausanias mentions no texts does not mean they were not there.

But it is the confusion over who painted what in the Stoa Poikile that is particularly instructive. In his description of the building, Pausanias mentions four paintings on its walls without bothering to attribute any of them to anyone. It is only later in his guide that he ascribes one painting, the *Battle of Marathon*, to Panainos, brother of Pheidias – an attribution already made a century earlier by Pliny.<sup>20</sup> Various sources inform us that Polygnotos painted an *Ilioupersis* in the Stoa (it may or may not have resembled the painting in the Knidian Lesche, but it was probably just as loaded with labels identifying the figures) and that the Athenian Mikon (nearly as accomplished an artist as Polygnotos) painted an *Amazonomachy*, probably right next to it. But no one says who painted a fourth work, *The Battle of Oinoe* (the subject and its possible relationship to the Marathon painting remain endlessly controversial).<sup>21</sup> And, strangely, there is, as it turns out, considerable uncertainty even about the attribution of the *Battle of Marathon* – arguably the most famous painting of the Classical world – with some ancient sources reporting that Mikon, rather than Panainos, painted it, and some that Polygnotos had a hand in it as well.<sup>22</sup> If there were signatures giving credit where credit was due, there would, presumably, have been no such confusion.<sup>23</sup>

The evidence (such as it is) suggests, then, that the painters of frescoes and wooden panels on display in public or sacred buildings could, but did not necessarily, sign their works in the 5th century (again, even Polygnotos may have signed only one of his two paintings in the Lesche). Habits seem to have changed, and signatures become more common, toward the century's end and then in the 4th century, and it can be no coincidence that the Late Classical period was an era of monumental artistic egos, fierce rivalries, art competitions (*agones*\*), a proliferation of treatises on painting by painters, and ingenious one-upmanship – of which the quintessential example is recounted in Pliny. Once upon a time, the renowned Apelles (widely celebrated as the greatest of all ancient painters, who in at least one solipsistic treatise claimed he had no equal in “artistic grace,” or *kharis*),<sup>24</sup> visited the studio of Protogenes on Rhodes and, finding him gone, left a kind of calling card by drawing a fine line across an empty panel on an easel. He then left. When Protogenes returned and recognized in the line the hand of Apelles, he drew an even

finer line in a different color over Apelles.’ When Apelles came back and saw what Protogenes had drawn, he split the two earlier lines with an even finer one in a third color, and won the day: not all signatures consisted of letters.<sup>25</sup> But there is a hint in another anecdote that Apelles could also sign more conventionally: in order to boost the value of Protogenes’ works, which he considered underpriced, Apelles spread a rumor that he was buying them to sell as his own – presumably by putting his own name to them.<sup>26</sup>

Before the elegant and magnanimous Apelles (proud though he was, he admired the work of other artists and even acknowledged their superiority in certain respects), there was the supremely arrogant Parrhasios of Ephesos, a transplant to Athens whose career is hard to date precisely but who seems to have worked for some decades before 400 as well as for some years afterward (for what it is worth, he is said to have discussed painting with Socrates, conceding the philosopher point after point – which does not sound like Parrhasios). He seems to have been especially renowned for his quality of line and contour, and his drawings on wooden panels and parchment are said to have been preserved and studied by artists long after his death.<sup>27</sup> He not only painted panels but also designed images for others to execute in bronze: he is said to have supplied drawings for all the works of the metalsmith and engraver Mys, including the centauromachy that decorated the shield of Pheidias’ monumental Bronze Athena on the Acropolis and, supposedly, an *Ilioupersis* on a huge cup from Herakleia that bore the epigrammatic double signature:

*Design [gramma] by Parrhasios, work [tekhnē] of Mys. I am  
the image of lofty Ilion, which the sons of Aiakos captured.*<sup>28</sup>

We are told that Parrhasios enjoyed an expensive lifestyle (he typically wore purple robes and a gold garland), that he painted sexually explicit subjects, that he happily sang while he painted, and that he sang his own praises: he called himself the “Prince of Painting” in one epigram and in another claimed that Herakles himself posed for him in his dreams.<sup>29</sup> Self-esteem was clearly not an issue. According to Athenaios, he signed many of his paintings with these same verses:

*A man who loves luxury but respects virtue painted this –  
Parrhasios, whose renowned fatherland was Ephesos, nor  
do I forget my father Euenor, who begat me, his legitimate child  
and the foremost practitioner of art [tekhnēs] among the Greeks.*

And in another, evidently fragmentary signature (the name Parrhasios does not appear in the quoted lines), he boasts:

*And if they harken to the unbelievable, I say this. I say that  
already the clear limits of this art have been revealed, by my hand.  
A boundary not to be surpassed has been fixed; but there is nothing  
completely flawless among mortal men.*

These first-person declarations are very different from the modest couplet of Polygnotos (though, perhaps, not so different from Iphion's "Simonidean" epigram). Parrhasios took the basic function of the signature – to claim credit for one's work – to hybriatic extremes, presuming that he could avoid the wrath of the gods with the small, conventional concession that nothing human is perfect.<sup>30</sup>

Parrhasios, then, seems to have regularly signed the works he painted or designed. If so, it is difficult to believe that his apparently younger contemporary and rival in arrogance, ostentation and skill, the flamboyant Zeuxis of Herakleia, did not.<sup>31</sup> Parrhasios may have loved luxury, but Zeuxis – "the best of painters," Lucian calls him, one noted for his originality and novel subject-matter<sup>32</sup> – became so rich that he eventually just gave his paintings away, claiming they were priceless. The degree to which Zeuxis or Parrhasios or other Late Classical painters labeled figures in their paintings (as Polygnotos, Mikon, and Panainos had done) is unknown.<sup>33</sup> But we do know that Zeuxis was not averse to writing a variety of things on his panels: beneath one figure of an athlete he wrote, defensively and preemptively, "Easier to criticize than emulate."<sup>34</sup> This was also an artist who supposedly displayed his great wealth at Olympia by having his name woven into his cloaks in gold thread,<sup>35</sup> and a man who wore his name on his sleeve (as it were) is not the sort of man who would have been shy about putting his name on his paintings. Still, there is only one extant (and probably genuine) signature-epigram that goes under Zeuxis's name: it directly challenges Parrhasios' claim to have reached the limits of *tekhnē* and criticizes him for assuming victory in a competition – "I do not think my painting will come in second," Zeuxis says.<sup>36</sup> It is odd that there are no other signatures by Zeuxis preserved or alluded to in our sources, and that our sources directly quote none by any of the other renowned painters of the 4th century – artists like Apelles himself (who wrote more than one book on his theories of art and presumably put his name to them),<sup>37</sup> Timanthes (who is said to have defeated Parrhasios in a competition held on Samos),<sup>38</sup> Protogenes, Euphranor (who was also a sculptor and wrote various treatises on art), Nikomachos, Pausias, Pamphilos (who, it was said, was erudite in all branches of knowledge), and so on. Now, Pliny tells us that the late 4th-century Athenian Nikias signed his works,<sup>39</sup> and there is an epigram that *looks* like his signature. It is said to have appeared on Nikias' famous painting of Odysseus in Hades (another *Nekyia*):

*This is the labor of Nikias. The eternal Underworld  
I have been fashioned, the tomb of every age.  
The House of Hades Homer has explored,  
And I have been painted first after that model.*

But the poem is, in fact, the work of Antipater of Thessalonike, writing some three centuries after Nikias.<sup>40</sup> The painting speaks, but the words are not



the painter's, and they constitute not a true signature but a distant literary exercise, an *ekphrasis* (a literary description of a work of art) that was never actually affixed to the painting itself. So, too, virtually no Hellenistic Greek painter's signature survives in fact or in the telling, though the paintings we read about in our sources or see on the facades of Macedonian tombs or find reflected in Pompeian mosaics or wall-paintings in Rome would have been signature-worthy.<sup>41</sup>

In the end, the Greek painter's signature was a random thing in any period: some paintings (like Polygnotos's *Ilioupersis* in the Knidian Lesche) were signed, some (like, evidently, Polygnotos' own *Nekyia* in the same building or the *Battle of Marathon* in the Stoa Poikile) were not. Probably the signature was more fashionable in some periods (above all, the era of Parrhasios and Zeuxis) than in others. Perhaps signature-epigrams that might have appeared on any number of Late Classical and Hellenistic panel-paintings simply did not merit the attention of later anthologists. Or perhaps signatures reverted to other, simpler forms ("So-and-so painted me") that were too mundane to quote. But there must have been something besides mere tradition that allowed later commentators like Pliny, writing in the 1st century CE, or his own sources, to identify paintings produced in, say, the 4th century BCE – that great age of artistic egos and *agones* – and to distinguish the work of one artist from another. Sometimes, that might have been a label. Often, it would have been an autograph.<sup>42</sup>

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### MOSAICS

ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL GREEK ARTISTS EVIDENTLY PAINTED PLASTERED floors as well as walls, but by the late 5th century BCE they began to “paint” figured scenes with smooth pebbles (black, white, colored) and then, in the Hellenistic period, with small cubes of cut stone and glass called *tesserae*. Greek mosaicists signed their work, too, though the practice (so far as we can tell) was rare and began relatively late. The earliest extant signature on a mosaic does not, in fact, appear until the late 4th century when, in a panel more than 3 meters on a side at the center of an elaborate dining-room floor in a palace-like building (House I.5) at the Macedonian capital of Pella, Gnosis depicted in variously colored small stones a remarkably powerful and violent scene of two young hunters (and their dog) attacking a desperate stag over uneven terrain [Fig. 27] – the kind of activity that helped define and epitomize Macedonian (and Greek) manhood.<sup>1</sup> Arms are cocked, ready to bring weapons down upon the animal; a hat flies off a hunter’s head as he grabs hold of an antler; the dog draws blood with its bite; the stag’s tongue protrudes in panic and pain. Gnosis’ mastery of pebbles – his ability to render highlighted and shadowed musculature and a sense of pictorial space – is, in fact, “painterly,” and it must have rivaled the effects of contemporaries wielding brushes (even though the background here is dark).<sup>2</sup> And so it is fitting that the integrated signature GNŌSIS EPOËSEN is written neatly in white across the top of the panel (though the airborne hat disrupts the text and separates the final N from the rest). There were other, even larger figured mosaics in the house,



27. Stag hunt mosaic from Pella, signed by Gnosis; late 4th century BCE. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.

but they appear on technical grounds to be the work of different artists, and they are unsigned. At all events, Gnosis' signature must be an autograph: it is inconceivable that he (or any mosaicist) would withdraw from the creative process precisely at the point when the signature – as physically a part of the pebbly floor as the image – was written. Now, this mosaic cannot have been Gnosis' first effort: he must have brought an impressive resumé with him to Pella – more impressive, perhaps, than those of the artists who left the other mosaics in the building (fine as they are) unsigned. Gnosis's autograph must mark his pride in his own work. But, presumably, it would not have been written without the consent or expectation of the Macedonian nobles who commissioned him, nobles who repeatedly crossed the floor and who enjoyed the prestige that Gnosis' work (a scene of ideal, manly men hunting and killing) bestowed upon it, and upon them.

There is a roughly contemporary, fragmentary pebble mosaic from Athens signed by [Someone Whose Name Ended in] ON.<sup>3</sup> It represents a centauro-machy, but it is a monochrome and mediocre work: once again, signed works are not always distinguished. And that is that: there is no other signed mosaic from the Greek mainland (at least none that can be securely dated before the Roman period), and the next ones in chronological order are a century or more later and farther afield: they come from Thmuis (Tell el-Timai) in the



28. Hellenistic mosaic from Thmuis (Tell el-Timai), Egypt, signed by Sophilos; c. 200 BCE. Alexandria, Greco-Roman Museum 21749. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.

Nile Delta. In two panels less than a meter on a side, bordered by an illusionistic double meander and a guilloche, there are the nearly identical busts of a wild-eyed woman dressed in military garb, holding a mast, wearing a headdress in the shape of a ship's prow, with black-and-white ribbons curling around her like snakes (and there is something Medusan about her) [Fig. 28]. She may be a personification (Alexandria?). She may be a Ptolemaic queen (Berenike II?). Neither identification inspires complete confidence. But whoever she is, the technique known as *opus vermiculatum* – that is, the use of tiny, multicolored tesserae that allowed the artist to mimic the effects of brushstrokes – has been mastered, and the artist has signed both works above the woman's head: ΣΟΦΙΛΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ.<sup>4</sup>

Sophilos's mosaics probably date to the end of the third or the beginning of the second century, and so he was likely a rough contemporary of the only mosaicist whose name is recorded in our literary sources: Sosos, "the most renowned artist in the genre," according to Pliny.<sup>5</sup> Sosos was famed for an illusionistic mosaic of an "Unswept Room" (*asarotos oikos*) at Pergamon, probably laid (along with an equally famous scene of doves drinking and pluming on the rim of a golden goblet) in the Palace of Eumenes II (197–159 BCE). The original *asarotos oikos* does not survive, but we have several later copies or (since they all differ from one another) variants of it from Aquileia





29. Detail of a mosaic from the Aventine Hill, Rome, signed by Heraklitos (2nd century CE), imitating a Hellenistic mosaic made by Sosos at Pergamon (early 1st century BCE). Vatican: Museo Gregoriano Profano 10132. Photo: Scala/Art Resource, New York.

in north Italy, from Uthina in Tunisia, and from the Aventine Hill in Rome. The Roman version (usually dated to the 2nd century CE) presents a *trompe l'oeil* panorama of fish bones, olive pits, chicken bones, fruit stems, seashells, and other scraps littering a white floor and even casting shadows upon it, as if the party were still going on and banqueters were still tossing the detritus of their meal down for servants to sweep up (a charming detail of a mouse taking advantage of the situation and nibbling a cracked walnut seems to be, alas, a Renaissance restoration) [Fig. 29]. But the copyist's impulse for imitation went only so far, and (assuming that the well-known original was signed) he replaced the signature of Sosos with his own: HĒRAKLITOS ĒRGASATO, written, a little off-center, below an array of theatrical masks (theater being another kind of illusion) along one edge of the floor.<sup>6</sup> The signature is thus a kind of boast that Heraklitos, three centuries later, was able to compete with Sosos and match his famous illusionism. There was pride in the mastery of technique and in skillful reproduction as well as in originality – something well attested to in the signatures of other Greeks in the employ of Imperial Rome.<sup>7</sup>

The kings and artists of Hellenistic Pergamon evidently loved their illusions. In another room of the palace, near the edge of a large mosaic panel bordered with fruits and flowers and waves and meanders, a little piece of *trompe l'oeil* parchment, seemingly tacked onto the floor with globs of wax, is coming loose:



30. Mosaic laid by Hephaisteion at Hellenistic Pergamon. Berlin, Pergamon Museum, Mos. 70. Photo: author.

one corner curls up and casts a shadow, but the signature HĒPHAISTIŌN EPOIEI is clear [Figs. 30, 31].<sup>8</sup> Three panels set above the label – they were *emblemata*,\* or independent mosaics executed on their own separate trays or slabs before insertion into a larger matrix – were at some point removed, but whoever took them did not find the signature on the margins worth taking as well.

There are only a few other signed Greek mosaics, and one of them, arguably, is not even the work of a Greek. On a courtyard floor in the late 2nd-century House of the Dolphins on the cosmopolitan island of Delos, a central rosette is encircled by a series of decorative borders and, in the corners, leaping dolphins ridden by small winged Erotes. Inconspicuously set into a floral garland near the center is the tiny signature

[ . . . ]PIADĒS ARADIOS EPOIEI

[ . . . ]piades of Arados made [it].

There is nothing about the plan or architecture of the house itself that is not Greek. There is nothing about the mosaic and its patterns that is not Greek. The words of the signature are written in Greek; the formula is Greek; and the name of the artist, generally restored as Asklepiades, is Greek, too. But Arados is a town in Phoenicia, and so the question is: was Asklepiades an ethnic Greek somehow born or resident in Phoenicia, or was he an ethnic Phoenician who took a Greek name while working on a Greek island in a completely Greek





31. Detail of mosaic with signature of Hephaisteion. Pergamon Museum, Mos. 70. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.

style?<sup>9</sup> Whatever the explanation, Delos is loaded with mosaics (many of them of high quality), yet Asklepiades' signature is one of only two found on the island. The other appears at the end of an atypically long and informative inscription on a geometric mosaic in the late 2nd-century Sanctuary of the Syrian Gods: it tells us that Midas, son of Zenon of Herakleia, was the dedicant of the mosaic and the exedra in which it is found, and, at the very end, that

ΑΝΤΑΙΟΣ ΑΙΣΚΗΡΙΩΝΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ

*Antaios son of Aiskhrion made [it].*<sup>10</sup>

Like many other Greek artists, mosaicists could travel far and wide to undertake commissions. Besides the case of Asklepiades, there is a badly preserved Hellenistic mosaic from Segesta in western Sicily signed *Dionysios, son of Herakleides, the Alexandrian, made [me]*. Segesta was not a Greek city: it was Elymian. But around 100 BCE someone there hired a Greek mosaicist from the eastern edge of the Mediterranean and presumably encouraged him to sign his work: it was a matter of prestige, and a sign of good taste, for a Segestan to have employed an artist from Alexandria, one of the cultural capitals of the Hellenistic world.<sup>11</sup>

If mosaicists could travel, mosaics could, too. Two *emblemata* found on opposites sides of a white mosaic floor in Pompeii's "Villa of Cicero" represent

scenes from comedies of Menander [Pl. IV]. The mosaics are relatively small (43 centimeters by 41 centimeters), and they are each set into a discrete marble tray or frame in which they could have been easily transported from their place of manufacture to the Pompeian floor sometime around 100 BCE. They are both subtly, even inconspicuously, signed in very small letters in shaded areas at the top of the panels: DIOSKOURIDĒS SAMIOS EPOIĒSE. There is no way of knowing just where Dioskourides of Samos made the two mosaics, but the marble of their trays points to some place other than Pompeii or even Italy – somewhere in Greece, though not necessarily Samos. Dioskourides himself may have based his works on earlier Hellenistic paintings (the cup an old woman holds in one mosaic looks like a 3rd-century type), but this virtuoso of *vermiculatum* must have rivaled contemporary painters with his pictorial effects – above all, his gradations of color and his mastery of light and shadow playing over flesh and fabric.<sup>12</sup>

Again, the signing of Greek mosaics was a very rare and completely Hellenistic phenomenon: counting Asklepiades of Arados once and Dioskourides of Samos twice, there are only nine or 10 examples in all.<sup>13</sup> Not only was signing abnormal, but, as is the case in so many other genres, many of the finest extant works are unsigned: the monumental Alexander Mosaic from Pompeii's House of the Faun – almost certainly executed by a Greek, based on a lost Hellenistic painting, but laid in a "Roman" (or at least Italic) floor around 120–100 BCE – is the quintessential example.<sup>14</sup> Still, it may mean something that with one exception – that undistinguished centauromachy in Athens by [Someone Whose Name Ended in] ON – the few signed mosaics that we do have are works of some ambition and achievement.<sup>15</sup> There may be, then, a modest correlation between signature and quality after all – a correlation not often found in other artistic genres. As limited as it might be, it suggests that the mosaicist enjoyed a fairly high status in the Hellenistic period, and that his name, even if under foot, could lend some prestige to the house, villa, or palace in which it was written in pebbles or in *tesserae*.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

## VASES

THE GREEK SIGNATURES WE ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH — THEY ARE BY FAR the most common — are those of potters and vase-painters, and it is worth emphasizing that they first appear not long after the Greeks themselves learned to write: the impulse to sign pots is felt and satisfied almost as soon as the requisite technology is developed. On a fragment of a locally made krater from the island of Pithekoussai [Fig. 32], usually dated to c. 720–700 BCE, there is a panel with a frontal, unbrowed, smiling sphinx and, in the horizontal band above, written right to left (retrograde), there is the fragmentary line

[ . . . ]INOSMEPOIES[E . . . ]

[ . . . ]inos made me.<sup>1</sup>

This is the earliest signature in Greek art, in any genre, and in this case the verb is surely inclusive: that is, [Someone Whose Name Ended in] INOS both made and decorated the vase. Other early *epoiese* signatures probably mean the same thing: KAL[L]IKLEAS POIASE on an early 7th-century stand from Ithaka,<sup>2</sup> or the signatures on a number of plain and mostly very fragmentary 7th-century chalices from Chios signed (and in one case also dedicated) by Nikesermos,<sup>3</sup> or the one on the anta of a richly ornamented 7th-century terracotta house or temple model from Thera made by Andrias,<sup>4</sup> or the partial signature on a fragmentary “Melian” amphora from Selinus on Sicily,<sup>5</sup> or the one on an imitation Protocorinthian *aryballos*\* made by Pyrrhos, son of Agasileos (where he made it we do not know),<sup>6</sup> or the one on the famous Aristonothos krater

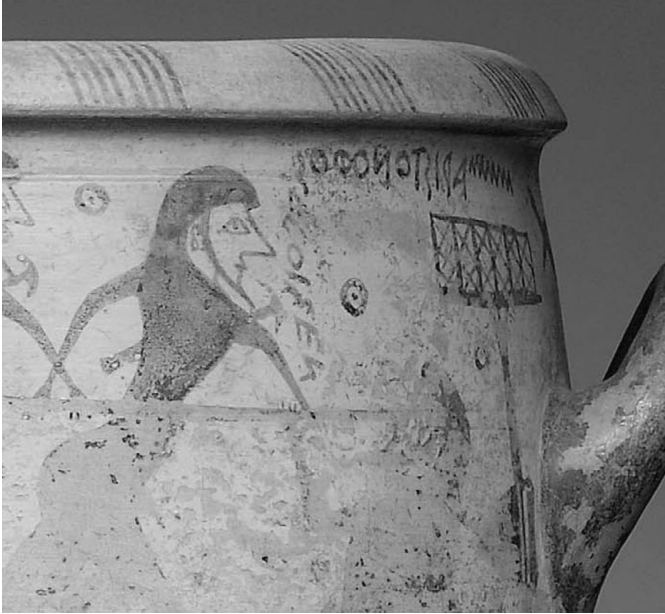


32. Krater fragment from Pithekoussai, signed by [...]INOS; late 8th century BCE. Drawing after Boardman 1998, fig. 162.

found in an Etruscan tomb at Caere [Pl. II]. According to the generally accepted narrative, this last vase was made by an émigré who around 650 BCE left Greece or a Greek colony in the west for greener pastures and set up shop in Caere itself (his oxy-moronic name, *Noble Bastard*, may hint at unfortunate familial reasons for the move), but other scenarios are imaginable.<sup>7</sup> In any case, there is a naval battle on one side of the vase (a Greek warship or privateer is about to ram an Etruscan merchant ship) and, on the other, Odysseus and his men are already ramming the eye of the drunken Polyphemos (as

they often do in mid-7th-century art) with a spit or stake. There are no labels, but the signature ARISTONOPHOS EPOISEN – clearly an autograph, like other 7th-century signatures – begins above the Cyclops’ cheese shelf [Fig. 33]. That is, the text (as is so often the case, in every genre) is *within* the image: it is a part of it – an “integrated signature” (see Glossary). It is once again written retrograde (which is also common) but takes the unusual form of a right angle. The letters take a sharp left turn, leaving the horizontal for the vertical just where name meets verb, in front of Odysseus’ face – unless Odysseus is the man in back jamming his foot against the border of the picture (which, like the signature, thus becomes part of the image) to gain leverage. And so Aristonothos is playing with the idea of naming, declaring his own while Odysseus, at this point in the Homeric story the artist is depicting, has falsely declared his: until he makes good his escape, our hero is known to Polyphemos only as *Outis* (No One). Aristonothos plays with the theme of sight, too: he has filled the field of this scene of blinding with nearly 20 dotted circles – little open “eyes” (there are none in the sea battle on the other side of the vase, though an apotropaic eye does appear on the prow of the Greek ship – the other ship has none and so is sightless, as Polyphemos will soon be).<sup>8</sup> But, clever though he may have been, Aristonothos has misspelled both words in his signature – he should have written ARISTONOTHOS EPOIESEN – and that suggests that the artist was not very familiar with writing even his own name.

At all events, the first *epoiesen* signature [Fig. 32] is written well before the earliest discrete vase-painter’s signature, where the operative verb is *egraphsen* (“painted”). That does not certainly appear until the mid-7th century, on a polychrome sherd from Naxos with a lively scene of racing chariots [Pl. VII]. The name is lost, but above the horses there is the inscription



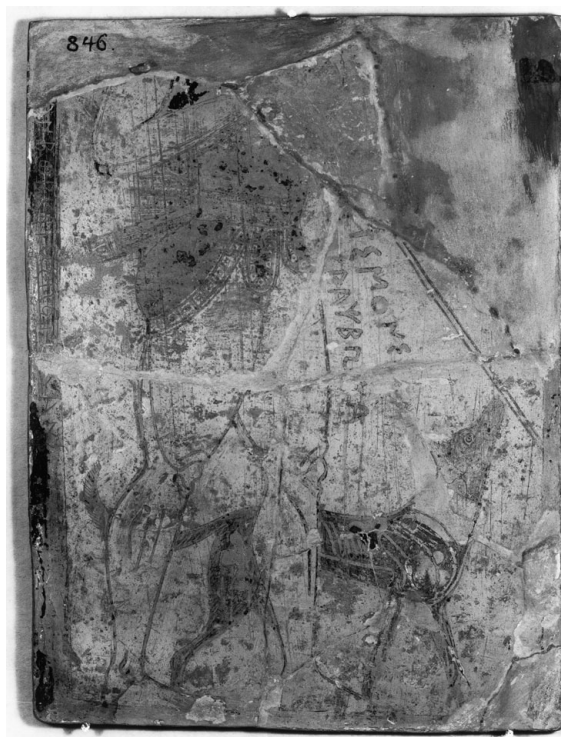
33. Detail of signature on Aristonothos krater (Pl. II), c. 650 BCE. Collezione Castellani CA 172. Courtesy Musei Capitolini, Rome.

[...EGR]APHSEN. The fragment documents that vase-painting was recognized – even valued – as a craft distinct from potting by the second half of the century: specialization is setting in.<sup>9</sup> Still, *epoiesen* inscriptions are not only earlier than *egraphsen* inscriptions, they will always be far more common as well, and from that, it would seem, the potter, not the vase-painter, was regarded as the more significant artisan (when they were two different people), the one whose name really mattered. That is the conventional wisdom, but, as we shall see, it may not be correct in every instance.

To sign or not to sign may be the question, but it is often difficult to detect any logic or consistency in the answers: as we shall see, some of the finest vases are not signed, some of the worst are (and that is a peculiarity we sometimes find in other media as well). Moreover, practices differ from region to region and from polis to polis. Take, for example, Sparta: the written word is rare on Lakonian vases in the first place, but signatures do not occur at all. That is, the Lakonian vase-painter could on occasion label mythological heroes like Herakles or historical kings like Arkesilas of Kyrene or warriors or even common laborers, and sometimes he could write strings of letters that make no sense. But no Lakonian potter or vase-painter – not even talented ones like the so-called Hunt Painter – ever identified himself.<sup>10</sup> It may not be entirely coincidental that, according to Herodotos, the Spartan despised craftsmen even more than the average Greek did.<sup>11</sup>

But, then, take Corinth. According to Herodotos again, the Corinthians despised those who worked with their hands (*kheirotekhnas*) less than anyone





34. Painted plaque from Pentaskouphia, signed by Timonidas; c. 580 BCE. Berlin F 846. Photo: bpk, Berlin/Staatliche Museen/Art Resource, New York.

else. Their artisans manufactured thousands of vases in the 7th and early 6th centuries and sent them all over the Greek world (and beyond). They frequently labeled figures, both mythological and real, on vases and other objects (like the text-rich cedar, ivory, and gold Chest of Kypselos on display at Olympia). And they could write long inscriptions upon them as well (such as the sinuous text *Polyterpos*. [*This is*] *Pyrrias leading the dance; to him [is] the olpa* that winds its way around and between performers on a Middle Corinthian aryballos in Corinth, suggesting movement and playing as much of a decorative role on the vase as the figures themselves).<sup>12</sup> And yet we still know the names of only two Corinthian potters (Ekhecles, who signed a cup as both potter and dedicant, and Perillos) and only three Corinthian vase- or pinax-painters

(Khares, Milonidas, Timonidas), in addition, possibly, to one whose name (written on a fine polychrome wooden plaque from Pitsa) is unreadable but who identified himself as *Ho Korinthios* (the Corinthian).<sup>13</sup> Milonidas' signature is known only from a fragmentary painted terracotta pinax that he also dedicated:

MILONIDAS EGRAPSE K'ANETHEKE

*Milonidas painted and dedicated [me].*

This plaque, with its depiction of a chariot team, represents Milonidas' entire oeuvre, but we assume that he also painted vases, like a rough contemporary who around 580 or 570 BCE signed a bottle with Achilles' ambush of Troilos

TIMONIDAS M'EGRAPHE

*Timonidas painted me.*

as well as a fragmentary pinax with a hunter and his dog [Fig. 34]

TIMONIDAS EGRAPSE BIA

*Timonidas, son of Bias, painted [me].*<sup>14</sup>



Milonidas, Timonidas, and *Ho Korinthios* (if he really was the painter of the Pitsa plaque rather than its dedicant) were skilled and meticulous draftsmen – something their use of *egraphse*, and not *epoiese*, seems to celebrate. Timonidas' bottle is one case where the potter's signature evidently did not matter more than the painter's (assuming they were different people): since it was not written, it did not matter at all.

But once again the quality of a work does not always correlate with the presence of a signature. Unquestionably the finest of all Corinthian vases is the Chigi olpe (c. 640 BCE), but although it is inscribed – the surviving labels identify Alexandros,



35. Corinthian pyxis, signed by Khares; mid-6th century BCE. Louvre CA 298. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, New York.

Athena, and Aphrodite in a badly damaged *Judgment of Paris* on the back of the vase (Hermes' and Hera's names would have been there, too) – the consummate artist who painted it did not sign.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, an abysmal mid-6th century Corinthian *pyxis*\* in the Louvre, with sloppy horses and sloppy horsemen sloppily labeled with names taken from the Trojan saga [Fig. 35], is signed KHARÊS MEGRAPSE, and Khares is a solid contender for the title “Worst Greek Artist Ever To Sign Anything.”<sup>16</sup> If signatures on the most fundamental level communicate simple pride in one's own work, Khares' opinion of himself was wildly inflated.

Despite the huge numbers of extant Corinthian vases (whole or fragmentary), then, only a handful are signed by potters or painters. The percentage is infinitesimal, and so, if the signature was also in any sense a marketing tool, Corinthian potters and painters did not avail themselves of it. Perhaps, given the popularity of Corinthian vases, they did not need to. Still, it is surprising that there are five times as many signed vases from Boiotia in just the first half of the 6th century (20 to four), and that nearly four times as many Boiotian potters sign their works as Corinthian potters do (seven to two). No signed Boiotian vase is known to have been found outside of Boiotia itself: their makers targeted the local market. All 6th-century Boiotian signatures on pots are *epoiese* inscriptions, and the majority are incised (either before or after firing) rather than painted. Boiotians can keep it short, as on two vases (one of them in the shape of a foot) incised with GRYTON EPOIESE [Fig. 36] or two more signed PHITHADAS ME POIESE. But they also have a tendency

to elaborate more than most: *Menaidas made me for Kharops* appears incised on four small vases (all austere decorated and imageless). On one of three vases signed by Mnasalkes (a ring aryballos abstractly decorated with chevrons, loops, and dots), we are even told a little story in two incised lines (the second is a hexameter):

MNASALKES P[OIESE] EMPEDIONDAI  
AUTAR HO DOKE PHERON PHILOTASION AISKHYLOI AUTO.

*Mnasalkes made [me] for Empedionidas.  
But he took and gave the same love-token to Aiskhylos.*

That is, at some point Empedionidas regifted the vase and added the second line. Another Boiotian painted a long and possibly hexameter inscription inside a cup that he apparently dedicated in a sanctuary, taking the opportunity to promote his work in general:

EPIKHE MEPOIESE THEIOIS PERIKALDEIA DORA

*Epikhe made me for the gods – beautiful gifts [he makes]!*<sup>17</sup>

Again, there are no *egraphsen* signatures from 6th-century Boiotia, and that suggests it was the shaping of a vase, more than the painting of it, that counted there.<sup>18</sup> But it is also likely that some or most Boiotian *epoiesen* signatures are inclusive: Gryton and Menaidas and Epikhe and so on probably painted the simple vases they made with their own hands. It is also possible that some of the names we have belonged to shop-owning potters who employed more than one painter: two different signers (different because they wrote their epsilons differently) may have signed two different vases GAMEDES EPOESE (Gamedes himself, of course, may have been one of them).<sup>19</sup> Gamedes is one of two Boiotian Black Figure artisans whose names we know, though he is by no means a master of the style. Boiotian Black Figure vases are abundant, and many of them are competent, lively, even inventive works – above all, a series of plastic vases (that is, vases in the shape of animals, such as a snake, monkey, or bull) proudly signed POLON EMEPOIESE (“Polon made me”).<sup>20</sup> Many bear inscriptions labeling heroes or praising the beauty of a boy (a so-called *kalos-inscription*\*) or even commenting upon the victory of a fighting cock.<sup>21</sup> Attic influences can also be strong (in fact, a few Athenian potters and painters even emigrated to Boiotia to ply their craft).<sup>22</sup> But most signed Boiotian vases are nonfigural, and most are ordinary or worse: one of the vases signed by or for Gamedes (it bears a parade of cartoonish men and animals) rivals Khares’ pyxis [Fig. 35] for its poor quality.<sup>23</sup>

The few Corinthians and Boiotians who sign their vases do not sign them before the 6th century is well under way. Neither do Athenians. But once they begin – and they begin c. 575 BCE with Sophilos, the first Athenian artist of

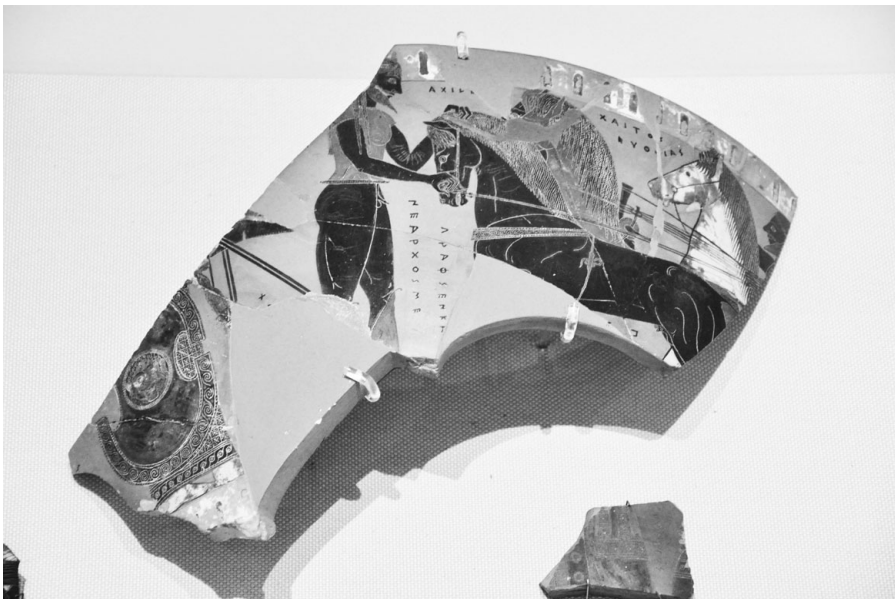


36. Boiotian plastic vase in shape of a foot, incised on the sole with Gryton's signature; mid-6th century BCE. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Henry Lillie Pierce Fund (98.897). Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

any kind whose name we know – they will sign far more often than anyone else.<sup>24</sup> In fact, eventually (in the late 6th and 5th centuries) Athenians, who now dominate the field, are the *only* Greek potters and painters who sign their vases.<sup>25</sup> Once again, *epoiesen* can mean “made and painted,” and on Attic Black Figure vases *epoiesen* inscriptions outnumber *egraphsen* inscriptions by a ratio of at least five to one.<sup>26</sup> But the Athenian school of vase-painting is the only one where the same artisan can sign the same vase as both potter and painter: Sophilos, for example, probably autographed a *dinos*\* with the (captioned) *Funeral Games of Patroklos* both ways [Fig. 37], and, on a large *kantharos*\* with Achilles and his chariot team, Nearkhos did, too [Fig. 38].<sup>27</sup> Athenian vases are also the only ones where potters and painters distinguish themselves and their different contributions to the same vase through signatures. The François vase (c. 570 BCE), for example, is signed by the potter Ergotimos and the painter Kleitias, twice each [Fig. 39]. Since he was the one who (with the enthusiasm of the newly literate?) painted and labeled over 120 figures, animals, and inanimate objects, Kleitias undoubtedly signed not only for himself but also for his partner, in which case Kleitias' two signatures are autographs and Ergotimos' are proxies.<sup>28</sup> So, too, the storied Sarpedon krater (now in the Villa Giulia) is signed EUPHRONIOS EGRAPHSEN and EUXITHEOS EPOIESEN, and since the penmanship is identical Euxitheos' signature must be a proxy, too: the painter Euphronios here did the signing for both.<sup>29</sup> And



37. Fragment of an Attic Black Figure dinos signed by Sophilos, probably as both potter and painter; c. 570 BCE. Athens, National Museum 15499. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.



38. Fragment of an Attic Black Figure kantharos signed by Nearkhos as both potter and painter, c. 560–550 BCE. Athens, National Museum, Acropolis 611. Photo: author.





39. Detail of François Vase, with vertical and retrograde signature of the painter Kleitias, c. 570–560 BCE. Florence 4209. Photo: author.

this is what we should logically expect. Inscribing vases with signatures (not to mention identifying labels and, occasionally, captions or even spoken words emanating from the mouths of figures) was a graphic exercise – the Greek verb *grapho* means both “I write” and “I draw” – and so the action was properly in the domain of the vase-painter. Inscriptions are applied with the same glazes or paints that the vase-painter uses in his images, and since they often play an aesthetic, compositional, or ornamental role, they must typically have been designed and executed by the painter.<sup>30</sup>

The overwhelming majority of Athenian figured vases – more than 99 percent – are unsigned. Thus, the overwhelming majority of recognizable Athenian vase-painters – and there are nearly nine hundred of them – have had names invented for them. They are products of connoisseurship and attribution like the “Amasis Painter,”<sup>31</sup> the “Andokides Painter,” and the “Brygos Painter” (named after potters for whom they worked), the “Mastos Painter” (after a breast-shaped cup he decorated), “The Affecter” (after his stilted, self-conscious mannerisms), the “Berlin Painter” (after the museum in which one of his masterpieces is found), or the “Worst Painter” (after his terrible draftsmanship). Out of these nine hundred vase-painters, we have 43 real names: Sophilos, Kleitias, Nearchos, Euphronios, Douris, Onesimos, and so on.<sup>32</sup> Forty-three names is a lot compared to all other schools of Greek vase-painting, but, given the vast number of Athenian vases, it is not really a lot.<sup>33</sup> Still, if the statistical sample is small (and the conclusions drawn from it

therefore tenuous), the complex issues Attic signatures raise are worth examining, and it might be useful to view them through the lens of a single master.

Exekias is, by common consent, the finest of all Athenian Black Figure potters and painters. Some 32 vases (or fragments of vases), with nearly 60 scenes, have been attributed to him (mostly on very good stylistic grounds), and 14 vases bear his name – in some cases twice, and in one remarkable instance twice that. On a fragmentary amphora in Taranto, Exekias painted nearly identical scenes of Herakles wrestling Triton on both sides of the vase and neatly framed them with vertically written *egraphse* and *epoiese* inscriptions (some words are restored, but the inscriptions clearly played a role in the formal organization of the surface). That is, Exekias emphatically signed this one vase four times – twice as potter, twice as painter – as if he wanted to leave absolutely no doubt about who produced it, and he used integrated signatures to structure the visual field.<sup>34</sup>

His masterpiece, however, is Vatican 344 (c. 540–530 BCE) – a Type A amphora, a shape (like other shapes) that he probably invented. On one side, Kastor and Polydeukes (both labeled) return home to their immortal mother Leda (labeled), their mortal father Tyndareos (labeled), and a happy dog – the dog and a servant boy are unidentified. Written vertically below Kastor's horse (labeled Kyllaros) are the words ONETORIDE[S] KALOS (*Onetorides is handsome*) – an irrelevant observation about the beauty of a contemporary youth inserted into the realm of mythic domestic tranquillity.<sup>35</sup> On the other side [Fig. 40], Achilles and Ajax play a board game, and since these heroes will both die at Troy the game of chance seems to presage their fate. These heroes are labeled, too, above their heads, but the names are in the genitive case (AKHILEOS, “of Achilles,” AIANTOS, “of Ajax”) – a remarkable concession that these figures are only images or imitations of the heroes, not the heroes themselves.<sup>36</sup> But the images speak: the helmeted Achilles calls out TESARA (four), the bareheaded Ajax TRIA (three) and so, naturally, the greater hero wins. Between Ajax and his armor ONETORIDES KALOS appears vertically once more. And floating over Achilles' back is the horizontal signature EKHSEKIAS EPOIESEN (*Exekias made [me]*) [Pl. VIII]. But Exekias signed the vase again. Around the mouth of the vessel a second, badly worn signature in rough iambic trimeter verse reads: [EKHSE]KIAS EGRAPHSE KAPOIESE ME (*Exekias painted and made me*) – a signature that has a better written, better preserved, and more precisely metrical parallel around the rim of a neck-amphora in Berlin [Fig. 41].<sup>37</sup> The short signature above Achilles on the Vatican amphora is proof (if any proof were needed) that *epoiesen* by itself can on occasion mean “both made *and* painted,” since that is what the longer signature around the vase's rim plainly confirms. In Exekias' entire oeuvre, in fact, *egraphse* appears on only three vases, and each time it appears in some combination with *epoiese* – in the discrete, paired





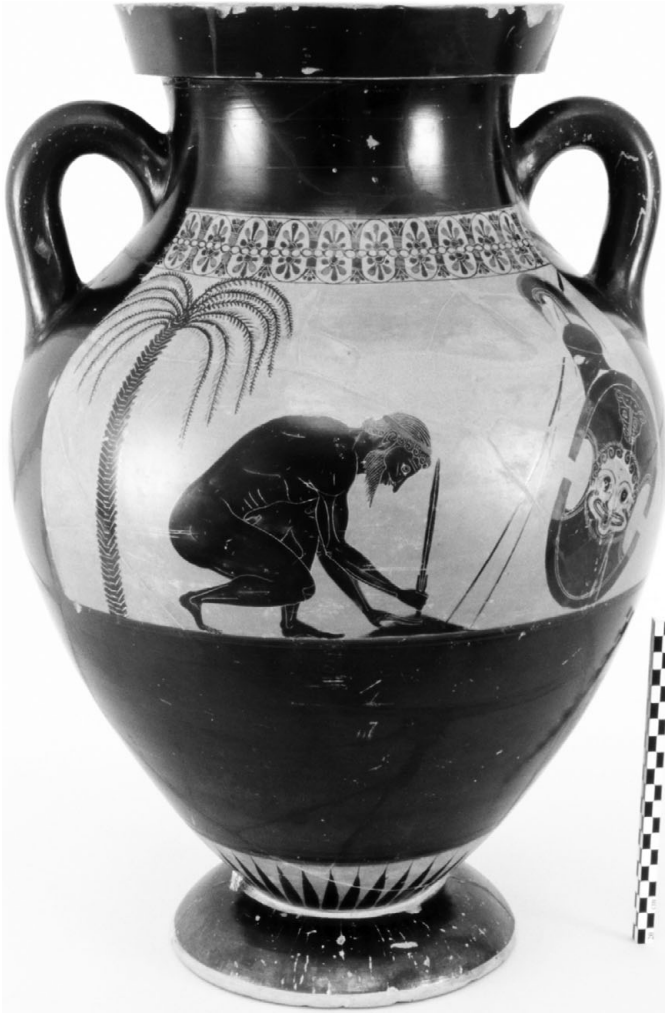
40. Attic Black Figure amphora (Type A), signed by Exekias; c. 540–530 BCE. Vatican 344. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.



41. Signature of Exekias as both potter and painter on the rim of the amphora, Berlin 1720; c. 540–530 BCE. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.

inscriptions of the Taranto amphora, and as part of the same continuous inscriptions on the rims of Vatican and Berlin amphoras. But if he generally seems to downplay his role as painter, other vases signed simply EKHSEKIAS EPOIESE and some vases with no signatures at all [Fig. 42] must on stylistic grounds have been painted by him, too. A fragmentary kalix krater from the north slope of the Acropolis – and the kalix krater is another shape Exekias may have invented – has long been considered a good example. It is full of labels identifying Herakles and Apollo and other gods and heroes, as well as an inscription noting once again that Onetorides is handsome. Although there is no signature preserved among the extant pieces of the pot, the wealth of other inscriptions – and especially ONETORIDES KALOS, which is probably the only *kalos*-inscription Exekias himself ever writes and which elsewhere in Exekias' oeuvre appears only on signed vases – encourages the belief that a signature was originally there somewhere. But that signature may not have been Exekias' after all: a recent study, focusing on details of anatomy and lettering, concludes that the vase, though painted in an Exekian "manner," is not his work.<sup>38</sup>

Whether that is so or not, there are some images on vases signed EKHSEKIAS EPOIESE that are almost certainly not his work. Exekias, in fact, probably began his career as a potter in the shop that produced so-called Group E vases: two or three amphoras with Exekias' name on them were likely painted and signed for him by other members of the group.<sup>39</sup> But there are also six cups (five Little Masters and one Siana) with Exekias' name that may not have been either painted or inscribed by him – at least, not by the great Exekias. On each side of a cup in the Louvre, for example, the phrase EKHSEKIAS MEPOIESEN EU (*Exekias made me well*) appears below a grazing deer, but the lettering and the animals are mediocre. The cup might be well made, not so its decoration, and it is hard to see why the master should have associated himself with so ordinary a draftsman. On an otherwise undecorated lip cup in Athens, EKHSEKIAS EPOIESEN appears neatly on one side, but nonsense syllables (ENEOINOIOIEN) evoking the Greek word for wine (*oinos*) appear on the other. And on another undecorated cup in Munich, the letterer who wrote KHSEKIKAS EPOES on one side clearly did not even know how to spell Exekias's name. These cups are not forgeries (indeed, whether the ideas of "forgery" and "authenticity," or the distinction between original and copy as we conceive of them today, even existed in Greek antiquity are debatable points).<sup>40</sup> And it is possible that they are vases that Exekias made but turned over to others for painting and inscribing. Still, since they seem to be earlier than most canonical Exekian works, it has been argued that the cups were made and painted by another, earlier Exekias – perhaps an undistinguished grandfather of the brilliant and original artist who would make and paint Vatican 344 [Fig. 40].<sup>41</sup> Those cups aside, when Exekias wrote *epoiesen*, he usually



42. Attic Black Figure amphora attributed to Exekias but unsigned, c. 540–530. Boulogne-sur-mer 558.3. Courtesy Collection Museum Boulogne-sur-mer, © Philippe Beutheret.

meant “potted *and* painted,” and the signatures are autographs. In other cases, the word meant just “potted,” and the signatures are proxies.

Although he was hardly the first vase-painter to sign the same vase more than once – Sophilos [Fig. 37] and Kleitias [Fig. 39] had already done that – we may still wonder why Exekias felt the need to sign the Vatican amphora in two different ways. The presence of the shorter *epoiesen* signature in the Achilles-Ajax scene [Pl. VIII] may indicate that this was the principal side – the “front” – of the vase (no signature appears in the Kastor-Polydeukes panel).<sup>42</sup> And it could be that the extraordinarily intricate harmony between the composition of the Achilles-Ajax scene [Fig. 40] and the architecture of the vase itself – the shields of the heroes are aligned with the bases of the

handles, their spears extrapolate the descending thrust of the upper handles, the heads of the heroes are placed within the V that the spears create, and their curving backs mirror the profile of the vase – led Exekias to emphasize his dual role as potter and painter in the signature around the rim.<sup>43</sup> But it could instead be that Exekias was instructed to sign the Vatican amphora twice by his client (assuming the vase was commissioned): the specifications of those who ordered works of art may have mattered as much as or more than the impulse (or, for that matter, the reluctance) of the artist to sign the work, and the client may have wanted Exekias' name conspicuously and doubly displayed to add status to the purchase and to emphasize his own discernment in having chosen Exekias to do the job.<sup>44</sup> The customer's share in all this seems confirmed by a fragmentary dinos in the Villa Giulia: two inscriptions seem to have been incised (rather than painted) after the vase was painted but before it was fired, and it is likely that the additions were made at the behest of a customer.<sup>45</sup> One inscription reads, typically, EKHSĒKIAS MEPOIĒSE, the other (in the same handwriting but, atypically, with two non-Attic letters) EPAINETOS MEDŌKEN KHAROPŌI (*Epainetos gave me to Kharopos*). It was apparently very important to Epainetos (who, to judge from the style of the letters, was from Sikyon) that Kharopos knew it was *Exekias* who made the vase, and he evidently gave Exekias a text to copy and incise in his native script.<sup>46</sup> These texts, at any rate, were written to satisfy a specific client's desires.

Exekias is not known to have painted any vase made by another potter. And so it is easy to picture him as the principal in a prestigious shop, as the potter of large vases (amphoras and kraters above all) that he could choose to decorate himself in a meticulous, monumental, even heroic style, and as the potter of other vases which he could turn over to others to decorate.<sup>47</sup> But there are questions about Exekias that we cannot answer. In the end, we do not know why he signed the Taranto amphora four times and the Vatican amphora twice (filling its panels with labels, spoken words, and *kalos*-inscriptions as well, Fig. 40) but wrote absolutely nothing on his belly amphora in Boulogne-sur-mer [Fig. 42]. With its psychologically powerful and sympathetic portrayal of a solitary, distraught Ajax preparing to die, teetering on small feet as he gently firms up the mound of earth into which he plants his sword, this vase is another one of the great works of the Archaic Greek art, and once again we find no correlation between quality and signing.<sup>48</sup> Even if we assume for the sake of argument that both vases were commissions and further hypothesize that the presence of a signature (and other words) on a vase was a function of the client's preferences, not Exekias', we still can only wonder why one customer would prefer a text-rich vase like the Vatican amphora and another a textless vase like the Boulogne amphora. To suppose that one customer was just more literate than the other does not seem good enough.





43. Attic Red Figure skyphos signed by Makron as painter and Hieron as potter (on handle), c. 490–480 BCE. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Francis Bartlett Donation of 1912 (13.186). Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

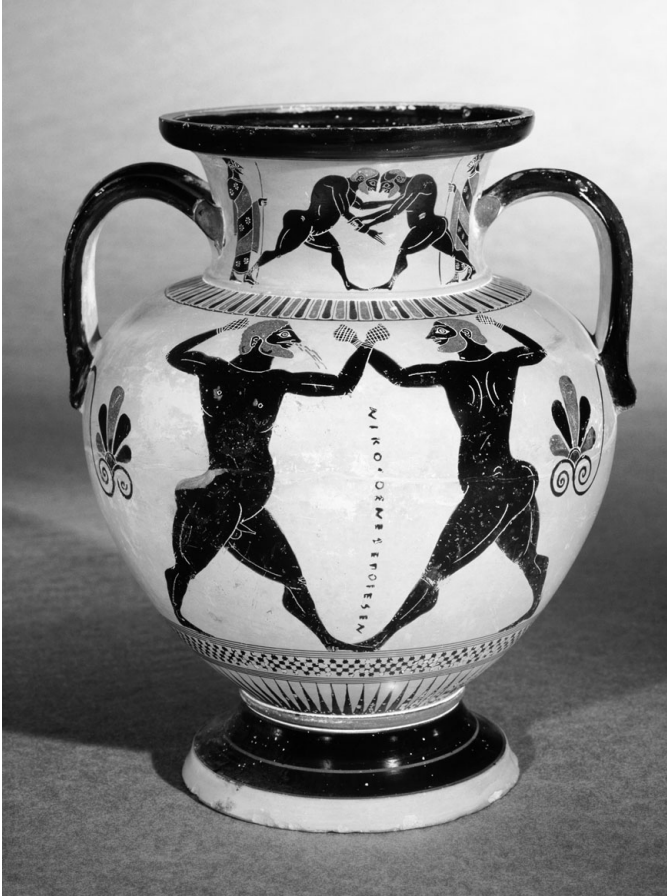
The questions we ask about Exekias can be asked about almost every other major Athenian vase-painter, in Black Figure or in Red, and the answers we can confidently give are few. There are no rules about signing Attic vases, any more than there are about signing gems, mosaics, or wall-paintings. At least, there no rules we can discern, and one reason for that is that a large percentage of Attic potters and painters who did sign vases are known to have signed only one of them: it is hard to extract patterns from that kind of evidence.<sup>49</sup> But if there are important exceptions in almost every case, certain tendencies do, in fact, emerge, and some generalizations can, in fact, be made about the writing of signatures on Attic pots:

- Signatures are inconsistent and random as well as uncommon and inscrutable things. One of the least productive of all Attic Black Figure potters signed the only vase that can be confidently assigned to him (and the egocentric vase is insistent about it): *Kleimakhos made me, and I am his*. On the other hand, the most prolific of all Archaic Red Figure vase-painters, Makron, signed only one of the roughly 350 vases attributed to him – a *skyphos*\* in Boston with (on the side he signed) Paris leading Helen away after his fateful judgment [Fig. 43].<sup>50</sup> Given those numbers, the logical question is: why did Makron bother signing that one vase at all? But he is not all that unusual. Hundreds of identifiable vase-painters, again, never sign anything: that is why we have to make up names for them. No potter or vase-painter signs his work all of the time. Only one or two signed very much of the time.<sup>51</sup> When one does, there is usually no discernable rationale (besides the obvious one that he wanted to claim credit for his work); when he

does not, there is usually no discernable rationale (besides the obvious one that he did not care to claim credit for his work).

- In the vast majority of cases (though not in all of them), the texts inscribed on vases (labels, captions, *kalos*-inscriptions, spoken words, *epoiesen* signatures, *egraphsen* signatures) were written by the painters of those vases.<sup>52</sup> So, when a vase like the François vase or the Sarpedon krater was potted by one artisan (Ergotimos, Euxitheos) and painted by another (Kleitias, Euphronios), the potter's signature is almost always a proxy, the painter's an autograph [cf. Fig. 39].
- A career in the Kerameikos called for some versatility. Some artisans who were primarily potters could also practice the art of painting, often with outstanding results (as in the case of Exekias). Some artisans who were primarily vase-painters could on occasion turn to the throwing of pots. For example, there is Douris, who was almost as prolific a vase-painter as Makron, with some three hundred vases attributed to him. Douris signed 39 times as painter. But he signed a kantharos in Brussels with both DORIS EGRAPHSEN and DORIS EP[OIESEN], and he made and painted an aryballos in Athens that he signed only DORIS EPOIESEN.<sup>53</sup>
- Altogether, more than twice as many potters as painters are named in signatures, suggesting (as we have noted before) that it was the potter who mattered more, who was the owner of the shop, who was responsible for sales, and who kept the profits. Many vase-painters worked for more than one potter. Others were fairly loyal: Douris, for example, early on worked for several potters (including Euphronios) but in time developed a long and close association with Python. Makron evidently worked exclusively for Hieron, though Hieron had more than one painter working for him: on their vases (such as Fig. 43) HIERON EPOIESEN, usually incised on a handle, outnumbers MAKRON EGRAPSEN some 44 to 1.
- But then there is the complex case of Nikosthenes (c. 545–510 BCE), an entrepreneur who catered to the Etruscan market. NIKOSTHENES EPOIESEN is the single most common signature in Attic vase-painting (and, for that matter, in all of Greek art): it occurs around 150 times, and that is about 25 percent of all the *epoiesen* signatures on all of the Athenian vases we have. NIKOSTHENES EGRAPHSEN never appears, but NIKOSTHENES EPOIESEN evidently means different things on different vases. The signature most often appears on pots that Nikosthenes seems to have thrown and painted himself – the signature is therefore most often (some 90 times) an autograph. But it also appears on vases he made with his own hands and signed himself, but that were decorated by members of his staff (so the “rule” that signatures on vases were written by the painters of those vases does not apply to him) [Fig. 44]. It also appears on vases Nikosthenes made but turned over to others to both paint and sign for him, and so those signatures are proxies (at least six or seven different hands wrote NIKOSTHENES EPOIESEN). It also appears on a few vases that Nikosthenes





44. Attic Black Figure neck-amphora, made and signed by Nikosthenes but painted by BMN Painter, c. 540–520. British Museum B 295. © Trustees of the British Museum.

himself neither made, nor painted, nor signed – it thus takes on the character of a brand or trademark, merely claiming the vase came out of his shop. It once appears on a vase made by another potter, which Nikosthenes himself decorated and signed.<sup>54</sup> And it once appears (in the form of NIKOSTHENES ME EPOIESEN KHAIRE – “Nikosthenes made me: greetings!”) on one side of a band cup that has a parallel *epoiesen* signature naming a second maker, Anakles, on the other side: here the word must refer to a joint effort, though it is hard to believe Nikosthenes and Anakles actually took turns throwing a single cup. It is more likely that the images of Herakles fighting the Hydra on both sides of the vase and the two *epoiesen* signatures were painted by Anakles. Taken together, the signatures would mean something like “Anakles and Nikosthenes made the cup together, one threw it, one painted it.”<sup>55</sup> The lesson of Nikosthenes is, in any case, that *epoiesen* is a difficult word, resisting easy definition, with different meanings depending on different contexts.



45. Attic Red Figure krater signed as painter by Euphronios, c. 510 BCE; Louvre G 103. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York.

- If the numerical superiority of *epoiesen* inscriptions suggests that the shaping of the vase was a greater source of pride than the painting of it, the absolute supremacy of the potter is nonetheless undercut by a large number of vases that bear only the signature of the painter (as we have seen, Timonidas's bottle with the ambush of Troilos is an early Corinthian example). If the potter and his name *always* mattered more, why should there be such vases in the first place? Euphronios, we know, painted and signed vases potted by Euxitheos and Kakhrylion, and we believe he abandoned painting for potting c. 500 BCE because that was where the money was. But there are earlier Euphronian works – for example, a krater in Paris with Herakles wrestling Antaios [Fig. 45] – that are signed only EUPHRONIOS EGRAPHSEN: here, two distraught women in the background even seem to direct our attention to the signature with their gazes and melodramatic gestures.<sup>56</sup> In such cases the potter's share is ignored – unless Euphronios was also the potter but on this vase preferred to highlight his role as painter.

Euphronios (“He of Good Sense”) was a member of a small, close-knit group of about a dozen progressive late 6th-century Red Figure artists known as the “Pioneers:” the coterie also included Euthymides (“He of Good Spirit”), Smikros (“Tiny”), and Phintias (meaning uncertain). Most of the Pioneers potted as well as painted. But it was their exploration of human anatomy and their bold depiction of the human figure in innovative, space-generating poses that distinguished them – and they knew it. They loved to write texts of all kinds (labels, *kalos*-inscriptions,



46. Attic Red Figure amphora signed as painter by Euthymides, c. 510 BCE; Munich 2307. From Furtwängler-Reichhold 1900, Pl. 14.

spoken or sung words, even nonsense), but they wrote *egraphsen* inscriptions far more often than *epoiesen* inscriptions (and so in this respect they are the opposite of Exekias). Some 20 vases or fragments have been attributed to Euthymides, for example. He signs six works as painter – the greatest is an amphora in Munich with the arming of Hector on one side and three staggering and brilliantly foreshortened drunken revelers on the other [Fig. 46]. Two very fragmentary painted *epoiesen* inscriptions might also be his, but one incised into the foot of an oinochoe in New York certainly is, so he potted at least occasionally.<sup>57</sup> Now, the versatile Euthymides was a panel-painter as well as a vase-painter and sometime potter, and it is conceivable that he was a sculptor, too (his father probably was).<sup>58</sup> So, perhaps, Euthymides – a figurative artist in two or three genres – wrote *egraphsen* more often than *epoiesen* because he, at least, valued his painting over his (or someone else's) potting. At any rate, on occasion the identity of the potter receded before the identity of the painter: on some vases it was the painter's name that really mattered after all.

- The chances of finding a signature on a vase are better if the vase has other kinds of texts on it.<sup>59</sup> It is no surprise that the François vase [Fig. 39], the Vatican amphora [Fig. 40], and the Sarpedon krater – all of them loaded with other kinds of inscriptions – bear signatures, while the otherwise textless Boulogne amphora [Fig. 42] does not. And since the Vatican and Boulogne amphoras are both Exekian, the literacy of the artist can have had nothing to do with it.
- And yet the inscription of labels and other texts did not necessarily encourage the writing of signatures. On an early Red Figure vase in St. Petersburg – it



47. Little Master cup signed by Tleson, c. 550 BCE. Courtesy Toledo Museum of Art 1958.70.

looks like the work of a Pioneer – a man, a youth, and a boy have a sweet conversation about the arrival of a swallow and the change of seasons: the words come out of their mouths, and the scene is captioned “*Spring is here.*” But there is no signature.<sup>60</sup> There are, in fact, many vase-painters, like members of the prolific Leagros Group, who like to write (even if they get a little untidy) but who never sign, and this is true for some non-Attic vase-painters as well (such as the “Chalkidian” artist aptly known as the Inscription Painter, who cannot label his figures often enough but never writes down his own name).<sup>61</sup> At the same time, NIKOSTHENES EPOIESEN are virtually the only words found on his products [Fig. 44]: Nikosthenes and the members of his staff wrote nothing *but* his signature, and those words did not attract others.<sup>62</sup>

- There are, in fact, many vases where the signature is the principal – even the only – form of decoration. This is true for the otherwise plain 7th-century chalices that Nikesermos of Chios signed; for the exterior of a black-glazed cup in Berlin that is decorated only with palmettes at the handles and the long, emphatic signatures of Kleitias and Ergotimos (one on each side); and for the exteriors of many of the Little Master cups signed TLESON HO NEAR-KHO EPOIESEN (*Tleson, son of Nearkhos, made*) [Fig. 47].<sup>63</sup> Here the signature itself is the principle object of aesthetic appreciation. In other cases, such as Exekias’s amphora in Taranto (where, again, the vertical inscriptions act as framing devices), or the Amasis Painter’s neck-amphora in Paris (where AMASIS MEPOIESEN is written vertically and precisely parallel to Poseidon’s trident and so strengthens the axis of the composition), or the interiors of Epiktetos’ plates in London (where EPIKTETOS and EGRAPHSEN are each written in separate arcs enclosing the figures like parentheses, rounding the composition off) [Fig. 48], or the interior of Douris’ cup in Paris (where DORIS EGRAPHSEN and KALIADES EPOIESEN, along with the labels MEMNON and EOS, a *kalos*-inscription, and an inexplicable string of letters, fill up virtually all the available space), the integrated signature is an important element in the total design of the image.<sup>64</sup>





48. Attic Red Figure plate (interior) signed as painter by Epiktetos, c. 500 BCE. British Museum E 135. Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.

- Finally, although it is true that the *epoiesen* and *egraphsen* inscriptions we have tend to name many of the best potters and painters we know of,<sup>65</sup> the broader evidence is rougher, and we cannot assume that a good vase will be signed and a bad one not. There are awful Attic vase-painters who do not sign (the Polos Painter, to cite one), and there are awful Attic vase-painters who do: Oikopheles, for example, who is known only for an ugly stemmed dish in Oxford [Fig. 49] that he signed as both potter and painter (to his credit he used the verb *ekerameusen*, “potted,” “threw the clay on the wheel” – a more precise term than the often ambiguous *epoiesen*).<sup>66</sup> There are outstanding Attic vase-painters who sign at least some of the time (Kleitias, Exekias, Euphronios, Euthymides, and Onesimos, for example), and there are outstanding Attic vase-painters who never do (the Nettos Painter, the Priam Painter, the Andokides Painter, the Berlin Painter, the Niobid Painter, and the Achilles Painter, for example). And there are plenty of outstanding Attic vase-painters who sign some excellent vases but not other excellent vases (Exekias, again; Figs. 40, 42). There is, in the end, no strict or necessary correlation between quality and signing.<sup>67</sup>

And now for a few words about the status of the Athenian potter and vase-painter – a venerable, controversial topic upon which signatures shed some light. It is often said that our literary sources never mention potters or vase-painters by name and that their absence from the literature is proof that they,

like other *banausoi*, were held in very low esteem, even general contempt. But it is not, technically, true that no ceramicist is ever mentioned. Aristophanes repeatedly attacks a low-life demagogue named Hyperbolos (seriously), a *banausos* who got very rich making terracotta lamps, and he once skewers the ill-tempered potter Kephalos, who makes politics well but “makes his cups badly” (the verb is *kerameuein*). And Diodoros tells us that the late 4th-century Sicilian Agathokles trained to be a potter as a boy before growing up to be tyrant of Syracuse, and even boasted that he had made pots the equal of golden cups.<sup>68</sup> These are not, of course, the kind of historical, aesthetic, or critical appreciations we find in, say, Pliny’s accounts of panel-painters like Apelles or sculptors like Lysippos, and, so far as our literary sources are concerned, Exekias and Euphronios might as well have never existed. But no ancient source mentions any die-engraver by name, either,<sup>69</sup> and, again, mosaicists do not fare much better (only one, Sosos, makes it into the record). And if no potter is praised and no vase-painter even mentioned in any of the usual sources, their craft is not completely ignored or necessarily denigrated, either. In a biography of Homer attributed (wrongly) to Herodotos, the poet is asked by Samian potters to sing them a song: *The Kiln* is the result, and in it Homer says he will pray for Athena to hold her hand over their kiln and for the potters to produce fine black-glazed cups and bowls, but, if they fail to pay him, he will invoke the spirits that destroy kilns and smash their pots to bits. More happily, Pindar, a native Theban, heartily approves of the “richly decorated walls” of Attic amphoras burnt by fire and awarded full of olive oil (the real prize) to victorious athletes at the Panathenaic Festival. And a *skolion* (or drinking song) the poet wrote for the Sicilian tyrant Thrasyboulos makes clear that Attic drinking cups – undoubtedly Red Figure *kylikes*\* like those painted by such contemporaries as the Brygos Painter or Douris – were admirable fixtures on the tables of the élite. In a catalogue of the most characteristic products of a number of cities and lands, Kritias (a late 5th-century Athenian poet, tragedian, and violent thug who was one of the Thirty Tyrants) lists “the offspring of the wheel and furnace, the most renowned pot” as Athens’ specialty: painted pottery – not marble sculpture, not bronze sculpture, not wall-painting, not temple architecture, but pottery – is, for Kritias, the trademark of the city that defeated the Persians at Marathon. And in a dialogue of Plato (or someone who passed for Plato) Hippias and Socrates agree that a fine pot is a fine thing and that Athenians produce some very fine pots (though they disagree whether the beauty of a pot is comparable to the beauty of a horse or girl). So, while Aristophanes might scorn *banausoi* like Hyperbolos and Kephalos, the craft of making and decorating vases itself was, at least in some circles, a source of Athenian pride.<sup>70</sup>

Athenian potters and painters were, however, a diverse lot. There are some who were, apparently, of foreign origin, such as the mid-6th-century Black Figure vase-painter who signed his name HO LYDOS, “The Lydian.” He





49. Stemmed dish (top view) signed as potter and painter by Oikopheles, late 6th century BCE. Oxford 189. Courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

painted in a powerful, purely Attic style, and so, wherever he or his parents were born, he was clearly trained in the Athenian potters' quarter (the *Kerameikos*\*). But The Lydian had some difficulty writing Greek, indicating less than a total command of the language: his lettering can be poor, his misspellings are common, and he once signs an amphora in the Louvre HO LYDOS EGRSEN, forgetting two very important letters in the last word.<sup>71</sup> There were other vase-painters of foreign extraction in the *Kerameikos* (Skythes, "the Skythian," for example).<sup>72</sup> And there were some who were or had been slaves, such as the accomplished Epiktetos [Fig. 48] – his name means "Newly Acquired," and his spelling is sometimes peculiar – or yet another Lydos who explicitly signs a vase LYDOS EGRAPHSEN HO DOULOS ("Lydos the slave painted [me].")<sup>73</sup> The Athenians repeatedly boasted about their legendary autochthony – they claimed to have always been there, born from the Attic earth itself. The standard derogatory attitude that the élite had toward those who worked with their hands and sweated at the kiln was bad enough. But in such a culture the deck was stacked especially high against immigrants or the children of immigrants or foreign slaves or freedmen who threw and painted pots for a living.

And yet there are scenes on a number of vases that show Pioneer potters and vase-painters hobnobbing with courtesans and aristocrats at lavish upper-class symposia or with aristocratic youths on athletic fields. On a vase in Brussels

[Pl. IX], for example, Smikros not only signs SMIKROS EGRAPHSEN horizontally along the top edge of the scene but also portrays himself, idealized, reclining on a banquet couch – powerfully muscled, handsome, beardless (and so youthful), with ribbon and wreath in his hair, theatrically throwing his head back, entranced by the notes of a flute-girl (the label SMIKROS follows the curve of his arm and hand, the instrument of both his artistry and literacy). This is a self-portrait of the artist as a young aristocrat, and it is another kind of signature: in essence Smikros has signed the vase twice, once in writing, once with his own labeled image.<sup>74</sup> And on a vase in Malibu (possibly also by Smikros) a young Euphronios woos an even younger boy in the palaestra.<sup>75</sup> The boy is the famously beautiful Leagros, who is repeatedly praised as *kalos* on Black and Red Figure vases of the years around 500 (Euphronios himself may actually have “portrayed” him as a dandy on horseback inside a cup in Munich).<sup>76</sup> The boy – the toast of the late Archaic Kerameikos – would grow up to be a general who apparently died far away in an ambush c. 465/464 BCE. But one of the earliest vases to praise a youth as *kalos* is a Black Figure hydria (c. 550–540 BCE) signed by the potter Timagoras and painted by the Taleides Painter. It praises the beauty of an Andokides, and this is very likely the same Andokides who would grow up to be a successful potter – the one for whom the Andokides Painter, possibly the inventor of Red Figure, worked.<sup>77</sup> So, this young and future *banauos* experienced the same flattering treatment as aristocratic youths like Onetorides and Leagros. And on a *hydria*\* in Munich one Pioneer, Phintias, paints another Pioneer, a beardless Euthymides, taking music lessons while above, on the shoulder, a playful courtesan (trying to hit a target with the dregs of her wine in a game called *kottabos*) calls out “this one’s for you, beautiful Euthymides!” This is not the standard formula of a *kalos*-inscription, but the point is the same.<sup>78</sup>

Now, there is a powerful argument that such scenes and flattering portraits of artists – found only on the vases of the Pioneers and so for only a brief time – are not to be taken seriously: they are wish-fulfilling images of and by a few close-knit vase-painters who only fantasized about learning how to play the lyre or enjoying the company of courtesans or mingling with the aristocrats who bought their pots. They are, in this view, “egalitarian fictions” – fictions that the elite purchasers of those vases in the politically turbulent last years of the 6th century (years that saw the founding in Athens of an early form of democracy) must also have been willing to entertain and so show their liberalism and tolerance for the lower classes.<sup>79</sup> Still, although wealth is not the same as status, we know that a few Athenian potters and painters became rich enough to dedicate costly offerings on the Acropolis – Nearchos [Pl. X], possibly, or a bearded potter depicted seated, cups in hand, on a votive relief (the dedicatory inscription on the frame is damaged, but he could be Pamphaios) [Fig. 50], or Andokides (who, along with another potter, Mnesiades, offered



50. Votive relief of a potter, possibly carved and signed by Endoios and possibly dedicated by Pamphaios, c. 500 BCE. Acropolis 1332. Cast in National Museum, Athens. Photo: author.

a bronze statue on a marble base to Athena), or Euphronios, or Onesimos, who during his late Archaic career apparently dedicated a bronze statue of an animal and seven marble water basins on the Acropolis.<sup>80</sup> And so it may not be coincidence that the first scenes of artisans mingling with aristocrats on Athenian vases and the first dedications of *banausoi* atop the Acropolis appear at roughly the same time. Euthymides himself is one of the few potters or painters to sign with a “patronymic” (a phrase naming his father), thus emphasizing his breeding and citizenship. He wrote EUTHYMIDES EGRAPHSEN HO POL[L]IO (*Euthymides, the son of Pollias, painted [me]*) on one side of his Revelers amphora in Munich [Fig. 46], and his father was almost certainly a prominent sculptor whose works stood on the Acropolis. So, Euthymides’

social standing may indeed have been higher than that of the average *banausos*.<sup>81</sup> It has even been argued that the fine draftsman christened the “Kleophrades Painter” by John Beazley in 1910 was really a member of the aristocratic Alkmaionidai clan named Megakles.<sup>82</sup> If so, the vase-painter did not just associate with the Athenian élite. He was one of them.

Whether he was really allowed to play in aristocratic circles or not, Euthymides is the author of what is perhaps the earliest instance of Western art criticism. Down the left side of the panel with intoxicated revelers on his signed Munich amphora [Fig. 46], Euthymides wrote (retrograde, vertically) HOS OUDEPOTE EUPHRONIOS (*As never Euphronios*), almost certainly a boast that he could draw a foreshortened figure better than his great rival down the street in the Kerameikos.<sup>83</sup> This bit of criticism is significant, first, because it (together with the signature on the other side) displays the pride and self-consciousness of a supposedly lowly vase-painter and, second, because it implies that stylistic change and progress – the new mastery of the three-quarter view, for example – was the product of competition and the desire to make things “better” and new. The intensely agonistic spirit of potters and other craftsmen is noted as early as Hesiod (c. 700 BCE),<sup>84</sup> and even in the 4th century – long after the heyday of the Athenian ceramic industry – Bakkhios, a member of a family that specialized in black-glazed pottery and Panathenaic amphorae, could have an epitaph engraved on his tombstone claiming a lifetime of competitive success based on both *tekhnē* and *physis*, on both learned skill and innate talent:

*Of those craftsmen who blend into one  
earth, water, and fire by skill [tekhnei]  
Bakkhios was judged by all Greece first  
for his natural gifts [physei];  
And in every contest held by this city  
he won the crown.*<sup>85</sup>

In all likelihood the sons of this same potter, Bakkhios and Kittos, emigrated from Athens to Ephesos sometime before 321, won that city’s commission to produce black pottery and a hydria for Artemis, and were for that granted Ephesian citizenship.<sup>86</sup> Those *banausoi*, father and sons, were champion potters as well as tycoons. The lesson, at all events, is that the banausic life was fundamentally agonistic, and that the signature might on occasion have identified the potter or vase-painter because he was engaged in competition, formal or informal: it was a way of distinguishing his product from his rivals’.

## CHAPTER NINE

### METALWORK

ON A FRAGMENTARY BRONZE SHIELD BAND MADE C. 580 BCE, BELOW A panel showing Menelaos, on the night of Troy's fall, dragging Helen by the wrist to Athena (who is labeled), there is another panel showing Deianeira riding the centaur Nessos: her hand gesture is the only sign that things will not go well [Pl. XI]. Both figures are labeled, and above their heads, across the full width of the panel, is the retrograde inscription ARISTODAMOS EPOIFESE ĒARGEIOS (*Aristodamos of Argos made [me]*) [Fig. 51]. This and another signature by the same artist on a shield band from Olympia are the earliest known signatures of a Greek metalworker.<sup>1</sup>

Writing on metal objects and vessels was not uncommon in the Archaic, Classical, or Hellenistic periods. There are inscriptions on many bronze hydriai marking them as the prizes of athletic contests (*One of the prizes from Argive Hera*, for instance), or as dedications to the gods, or as gifts; other inscriptions simply record the names of their owners.<sup>2</sup> A late 7th- or early 6th-century gold omphalos bowl from Olympia (now in Boston) is inscribed *The sons of Kypselos dedicated [me], from [the spoils of] Herakleia*.<sup>3</sup> Sometime in the third quarter of the 6th century an athlete named Exoides dedicated a bronze discus to the Dioskouroi (Kastor and Polydeukes) on (probably) Kephallenia: the inscription mentions his victory and great heart.<sup>4</sup> Armor and weapons could be inscribed with dedications after they had served their purpose. The engineer of the great Athenian victory over the Persians at Marathon (490 BCE) inscribed the edge of his own bronze helmet with *Miltiades dedicated [me] to Zeus*, and

brought or sent it to Olympia (whether he sent it to thank Zeus specifically for Marathon, we do not know). Sometime before that the Argives dedicated inscribed armor to Zeus at Olympia to celebrate a victory over Corinth. And after he defeated the Etruscans at sea in 474, the tyrant of Syracuse sent to Olympia captured helmets inscribed with *Hieron, son of Deinomenes, and the Syracusans, [dedicated me] to Zeus, Etruscan spoils from Cumae*.<sup>5</sup> The spectacular late Classical Derveni krater (it is made of a tin-rich bronze alloy that looks like gold) has the inscription

*[Possession] of Astioun, son of Anaxagoras, from Larissa*

inlaid in silver on the eggs of the molding around the rim.<sup>6</sup> A late 5th-century bronze herald's staff from a town in northeastern Sicily is inscribed *I am Longaneian property*. An early Hellenistic gold phiale from a site near Himera is inscribed with the name of the dedicant and its weight in gold staters: *Damarchos son of Achyris. 115 gold pieces*.<sup>7</sup> A series of late 4th-century bronze drinking vessels from Dodona and other sanctuaries are engraved with dedications to Zeus.<sup>8</sup> We could go on.

But if bronze, gold, and silver surfaces were proper fields for inscription, the evidence for signatures of Greek metalworkers after Aristodamos [Fig. 51] is thin.<sup>9</sup> A century and a half later, sometime in the late fifth century, Parrhasios and Mys are said to have collaborated on a great bronze cup from Herakleia decorated with the sacking of Troy and inscribed with a double signature naming Parrhasios as designer and Mys as engraver. As we have already noted, the signature is suspect at best.<sup>10</sup> Still, Pausanias (who does not specifically mention the cup) tells us that all the works engraved by Mys (including the centaureomachy on the shield of Pheidias' Bronze Athena on the Acropolis) were, in fact, designed or drawn by Parrhasios.<sup>11</sup> There is nothing inherently implausible in that. And since, as we have seen, that egotistical painter and graphic artist was by temperament a signer, it is likely that at least some of these other joint works bore their names in writing, too.

There is inscriptional evidence that a certain Deinokrates and a Timodemos signed at least two of the so-called "Golden Nikai" dedicated on the Acropolis in the last decades of the 5th century and the first decades of the 4th.<sup>12</sup> Of Deinokrates and Timodemos we know nothing more. But the Golden Nikai were, in fact, life-size bronze figures, numbering a dozen or more, each covered with two talents (nearly 120 pounds) of removable gold plate (or gold and silver sheets) that could be melted down for coinage during hard times (as indeed they were in 407/406, 404/403, and 294 BCE). Embodiments of Athens' wealth, the statues replicated the Nike that hovered in the hand of the Athena Parthenos (and so it is tempting to believe that Deinokrates and Timodemos were among Pheidias' assistants on that chryselephantine project), and they were in the care of the officials who managed the vast riches stored





51. Detail of shield band signed by Aristodamos of Argos, c. 580 BCE. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection (84.AC.11), Malibu.

inside the Parthenon and the Erechtheion. Beginning in 434 (which is also the date of the first epigraphical reference to the Golden Nikai), and continuing for well over a century, these Treasurers of Athena published annual inventories inscribed on marble stelai displayed for all to see on the Acropolis; a couple of hundred fragments survive. One entry in the accounts of a year around or after 318/317 BCE reads:

Gold phialai, which the treasurers in the archonship of Neaikhmos had made from the money which Arkhippos collected as archon for the 1 per cent tax, on each of which is inscribed “Nikokrates of Kolonos made me.” The three marked “S;” weight: 590 drachmas 3+ obols. Three gold phialai which Arkhephon of Erkhia made, marked “T;” weight 550+ drachmas.<sup>13</sup>

The signature NIKOKRATĒS EK KOLŌNOU EPOIĒSEN, according to the inventories, appeared on many other objects stored in the Parthenon: four silver hydriai sacred to Asklepios, five silver hydriai sacred to Athena, a gold hydria sacred to Artemis, a wine-jug (probably silver), a silver washbasin, and a silver platter (the last two sacred to Athena Polias). Nikokrates also signed a silver brazier stored in the Erechtheion, so the services of this late 4th-century gold- and silversmith were evidently in high demand. Silver hydriai signed by Diomedon and Arkhephon are inventoried as well.<sup>14</sup>

But these are all recorded signatures. Extant ones in metal, like Aristodamos’ [Fig. 51], are very rare. One of the few – EKHEE D’AUTA PASIKLĒS O KUDIMEN[EOS] (*Pasikles the son of Kydimenes cast these*) – appears on a monumental bronze *astragalos* (knucklebone) originally dedicated by Aristolokhos and Thrason to Apollo, but found at Susa.<sup>15</sup> Another – APOLLAS EPOIE – is engraved on an early 5th-century Aeginetan iron mirror that apparently has not been seen for a long time.<sup>16</sup> Another appears on a mediocre gold phiale from the rich Thracian Rogozen treasure, where a long inscription states that

the work belonged to King Kotys and that DISLOIAS EPOIESE (*Disloias made [me]*). Some have doubted that this could be a true artist's signature since the vessel is so poorly made,<sup>17</sup> but, as we have seen, that is no argument: many signed works of art in other media are not of the highest quality [cf. Figs. 35 and 49].

At all events, the evidence confirms that vessels and other objects in bronze, silver, and gold – prestige objects representing considerable investment on the part of the patrons who commissioned them, the customers who purchased them, or the dedicants who offered them – could be signed. But the evidence also indicates that they were not signed very often. Nikokrates of Kolonos may have been a prolific metalsmith who liked to sign his works, but the vast majority of the objects inventoried by the Treasurers of Athena lack recorded signatures: one entry lists, one by one, 27 silver hydriai dedicated to Athena Polias without naming a single manufacturer.<sup>18</sup> The Treasurers of Athena were not always fastidious or consistent, to be sure. But the examples of Nikokrates, Diomedon, and Arkhephon strongly suggest that where signatures occurred, they were duly noted, and that where none are noted, none existed. For the most part, none existed.

Objects of precious metal did not stand much of a chance of surviving antiquity, of course, and many signatures were surely smelted away. One may have belonged to an otherwise unknown Diodoros, who, according to an epigram, made a silver bowl with a sleeping satyr who was so lifelike that he would wake if he were poked.<sup>19</sup> Others may have belonged to the long list of silver chasers Pliny mentions – artisans like Mentor (the most renowned of them all), Akragas, Mys, and Boethos, whose works were still to be seen in his day on the island of Rhodes (goldsmiths, Pliny notes, were not as famous as silversmiths, which is curious). And when Pliny adds that Boethos, a Hellenistic artist known to have signed a bronze herm from the Mahdia shipwreck, was more famous as a silversmith than as a sculptor, we may plausibly surmise that he typically signed his silver vessels, too.<sup>20</sup> There were, obviously, many more signatures in metal than survive today, and it is even possible that the dedicators named on some vessels were also their makers. And yet the most impressive bronze vessels extant – the huge Archaic krater found in the grave of a Celtic woman in Vix, for example, or the Derveni krater – are unsigned, and that seems to have been the norm.<sup>21</sup> At best, the practice of signing metalwork was uncommon and haphazard, with little correlation to quality. It is a familiar story.

## CHAPTER TEN

## SCULPTURE

SOMETIME BEFORE 361 BCE, POLYEUKTOS, A BUSY ATHENIAN FROM THE deme of Teithras, arranged the divorce of his daughter Kleiokrateia from her first husband and then married her off to another, a man named Spoudias. The union was intended to put an end to some family unpleasantness and to secure a legal line of inheritance. In order to affirm and publicize the new state of affairs Polyeyktos (or his daughter and new son-in-law) commissioned two sculptors to create roughly life-size bronze statues of the newlyweds to dedicate to Demeter and Kore (Persephone), probably in the sanctuary known as the Eleusinion on the north slope of the Acropolis. The statues stood atop an unusual L-shaped marble base [Pl. XII] whose face was inscribed with several different kinds of texts [Fig. 52]. At the top was the dedicatory heading DĒMĒTRI KAI KOREI (*To Demeter and Kore*). Below that, on the left (and badly shattered) side, there were a few lines about Spoudias and, just below them, a (now fragmentary) signature: . . . YS[I]KL[ĒS EPOIĒSEN] (*[Someone Whose Name Ended in] . . . ysikles made [me]*). On the right side, a well-preserved text in five short lines tells us that Kleiokrateia was the daughter of Polyeyktos and the wife of Spoudias and then, in a sixth line, that PRAXITELĒS EPOIĒSEN (*Praxiteles made [me, her statue]*). It is likely that the two sculptors worked independently on their assigned portraits. Each one must have known what the other was making, and in that sense they collaborated on the monument. But so far as we know they were not in any



52. Drawing of inscribed base of portrait statues of Spoudias and Kleiokrateia, signed by . . . ysikles and Praxiteles, before 361 BCE. Agora Museum I 4165. Courtesy American School of Classical Studies, Agora Excavations.

real sense partners or members of a team. That was too bad for [ . . . ]ysikles, because we hear (very likely) nothing more about him.

But about Praxiteles we hear a lot. He would become one of the greatest (and richest) sculptors of the Late Classical period – his career is variously placed between 375 and 320 BCE – and some years after making Kleiokrateia’s portrait he would create one of the most famous and influential statues of the ancient world: the nude (and for that reason revolutionary) Aphrodite of Knidos, usually dated to the 340s. But that was still to come. Here, on the monument to Demeter and Kore, his signature is perfectly centered just 4 centimeters below the Kleiokrateia text [Fig. 52]. But it is much more lightly cut, and it is minuscule by comparison [Fig. 53]: its letters are only 0.9 centimeters high, less than half the height of the more deeply cut letters in the lines about Kleiokrateia (2.1 centimeters), and those letters, in turn, are even larger, surprisingly, than the letters in the dedication to the goddesses at the top (1.9 centimeters).<sup>1</sup> So, if font size is a guide to relative importance – if typography reflects a hierarchy among dedicant, honorand, and artist (an assumption that shall be tested later) – then the names of Kleiokrateia and Spoudias mattered even more than those of the divine Demeter and Kore. Praxiteles’ tiny, harder-to-read name mattered, too: otherwise it would not be there in the first place. But at this point in the early 4th century, near the beginning of his career, it may not have mattered all that much.<sup>2</sup>

Near the end of his career (perhaps as late as the 320s) Praxiteles was commissioned by an Athenian woman named Arkhippe to create a portrait of her daughter, also named Arkhippe, to stand (once again) in the Eleusinion. Once again the statue does not survive (it was probably bronze), but its inscribed marble base does [Fig. 54]. And this time PRAXITELEŚ EPOĒSEN is far



53. Praxiteles' signature on Spoudias and Kleiokrateia base. Photo: author.



54. Base of portrait statue of Arkhippe, signed by Praxiteles; 320s BCE (?). Agora Museum I 4568. Courtesy American School of Classical Studies, Agora Excavations.



more prominent. The signature is as deeply cut as the text about the mother dedicating the statue of her daughter. Like the dedication, it extends across the full width of the stone. Its letters are nearly as high (1.5 to 1.8 centimeters). And, importantly, it is inscribed 12 or 13 centimeters below the dedication. The center of the stone is actually left blank, and so the dedication above the emptiness and the signature below it each attract and merit the attention of the viewer on its own terms. In short, the gap between dedication and signature is a significant distance: it is a separation that creates a balance of emphasis between them.<sup>3</sup> On the earlier Kleiokrateia base [Fig. 52], the proximity of the shallow, puny signature to the more impressive text just above places the artist in an obviously minor and subsidiary position – his contribution to the monument almost seems an afterthought. This, in contrast, appears to be the signature of an artist who had grown considerably in stature.<sup>4</sup>

Still, it needs emphasizing that Praxiteles did not inscribe the signature himself: it was cut by a professional letterer whose “hand” may be detected in a number of public decrees and records from the end of the 4th century. Praxiteles’ signatures on the Kleiokrateia and Arkhippe monuments [Figs. 53, 54] are thus proxy signatures, and proxies had been, in fact, the norm (if not the inviolable rule) in Greek sculpture since the late 6th century.<sup>5</sup> Now, like any sculptor concerned about the final presentation of his work, Praxiteles almost certainly supervised the installation of his statues upon their bases and may have even overseen the layout and carving of their texts beforehand.<sup>6</sup> But no matter what reputation he enjoyed, and whatever the degree of his involvement in the inscribing and installation of the monuments, the content and composition of the inscriptions on both bases were ultimately not under his control: they were up to the dedicants, the ones who paid the bills, the ones who had the discernment to hire Praxiteles in the first place and who must have benefited in some way from having his signature written upon the stones.

Most Greek free-standing statues in marble or bronze were dedications in sanctuaries or markers over tombs, and that is also true for nonarchitectural marble reliefs. Both statues and stelai were thus typically and predictably accompanied by texts written upon them or their bases – texts naming the dedicator and honorand (and sometimes the reason for the offering), texts naming the deceased (and sometimes the circumstances of death), texts that were meant to be read aloud (though, of course, in a crowded sanctuary or cemetery many might not be noticed). Naming was the purpose of these texts, and the voiced repetition of names part of their perpetuating power. Near the beginning of Archaic sculpture, for example, a bronze warrior (if he brandished a spear) or Apollo (if he held a bow) had the dactylic hexameter inscription

*Mantiklos dedicated me to Apollo of the silver bow,  
a tithe. You, Phoibos, give some pleasing favor in return.*



written *boustrophēdon* across his legs.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the earliest life-size Greek marble statue has

*Nikandre dedicated me to the far-shooter of arrows,  
the excellent daughter of Deinodikes of Naxos,  
sister of Deinomenes, wife of Phraxos now.*

carved into the left side of her peplos.<sup>8</sup> And the quintessentially Archaic kouros from Anavyssos [Fig. 2] stood atop a base inscribed with a poignant call to mourning in four lines:

*Stop and mourn beside  
the tomb of dead Kroisos, whom,  
fighting in the forefront,  
furious Ares destroyed.*<sup>9</sup>

Texts are often much more laconic than these. The base of a late kouros from the Mesogeia in eastern Attica, for example, is inscribed simply with one word, a name in the genitive: ARISTODIKO ([Marker] of Aristodikos).<sup>10</sup>

But whether the work was votive or funerary, whether the words were many or few, the Greek statue or stele was invariably part of an ensemble of text and image, and on occasion the ensemble included the signature of the sculptor. The best example extant may be the grave monument of Phrasikleia, an aristocratic girl who died around 550 BCE before she could marry and who was buried in a cemetery at Myrrhinous (Merenda) in rural eastern Attica [Fig. 55]. The well-preserved, elegantly attired, and once colorfully painted *korē* that marked her grave (discovered in 1972) stood atop a base that has been known since 1730. Its front face is poetically inscribed, *stoikhēdon* (that is, with the letters aligned vertically in columns and horizontally in lines):

*Sēma (marker) of Phrasikleia.  
Korē (maiden) shall I be called  
forever, given instead of marriage  
this name from the gods  
as my lot.*



55. The Phrasikleia *korē*, signed by Aristion of Paros; c. 550. Athens, National Museum 4889. Photo: author.



56. The signature of Aristion of Paros on the left side of the base of the Phrasikleia korē. Photo: author.

And around the corner, at the top of the left side of the base (left as you face the statue, Phrasikleia's proper right), there is the signature ARISTION PARI[OS M'EP]O[E]SE [Fig. 56].<sup>11</sup> There is not much room below the epitaph for a signature, but in fact Aristion of Paros, to judge from other works (such as his funerary monuments for Antilochos and Xenophantes), seems to have preferred to sign on the side of statue bases rather than on their front.<sup>12</sup> At all events, the *sēma* of Phrasikleia is a rare example of a complete ensemble: statue, base, and texts (epitaph and signature) are all there.

We are unlucky in the very small number of such ensembles that have survived intact: even the funerary monument of Kroisos [Fig. 2] – clearly the work of a major sculptor – is incomplete, lacking two of the three steps upon which the statue originally stood (a signature, for all we know, might have been inscribed upon one of them).<sup>13</sup> Typically, we just have statues without bases and bases without statues. We have no ancient blocks (with or without inscriptions) on which to set the Riace Bronzes or the Artemision Bronze God or the marble Charioteer from Motya. And even at Delphi, where we have part of the inscribed base upon which the famous bronze Charioteer and his team of four once stood, there is no signature.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, we have a number of bases signed by Praxiteles [Pl. XII, Figs. 53, 54] and Lysippos [Fig. 57], but no Praxitelean or Lysippan originals to set upon them. In short, it is not often that we can pair an extant statue with an extant, signed base.

As it is, the Greek sculptor's signature, like that of any other Greek artisan, seems a random thing. We know the names of more than seven hundred Greek sculptors who worked before the Roman Empire (and more than two



57. Statue base signed by Lysippos. Corinth I 29. Photo: I. Ioannidou and L. Bartzioti. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations.

hundred more who worked during it), and this is roughly five times the number of wall- or panel-painters or ceramicists (potters, vase-painters) whose names we know.<sup>15</sup> Still, the overwhelming majority of extant Greek statues, reliefs, and bases (even those with extensive dedications or epitaphs) lack signatures, and a few rough statistical samplings indicate just how meager the evidence is:

*Sample 1.* There are about three hundred extant works of Archaic sculpture from Attica alone, but only 38 of them are signed – a ratio of eight to one. As for Archaic Greece as a whole (c. 650–480 BCE), the names of only 36 sculptors are known from surviving signatures.<sup>16</sup>

*Sample 2.* Some four hundred dedications from the 6th and 5th centuries are known from the Athenian Acropolis alone.<sup>17</sup> There are inscribed marble columns and pillars and round or squared bases (which all supported statues of bronze or marble or reliefs), and there are inscribed altars and water basins, too. We are, of course, missing a great deal, and many of the surviving texts are badly damaged and thus must be heavily (and often uncertainly) restored. But by one count there are only 85 sculptors' signatures (certain or plausible) found upon these four hundred inscribed objects – just over 20 percent.<sup>18</sup>

*Sample 3.* The Sanctuary of Apollo Ptoos in Boiotia has yielded up one of the earliest of all sculptor's signatures – [ . . . ]OTOS EPOIFESE – found on the hem of a fragmentary limestone Daidalic korē that might be as early as Euthykartides' kouros (c. 625 BCE) [Fig. 58].<sup>19</sup> But it would be another century before the next signature is known to have appeared at the Ptoon. And although over 120 kouroi or parts of kouroi have been



58. Drawing of fragmentary Boiotian kore from the Ptoon, signed by [...]OTOS, c. 625 (?). Athens, National Museum 2. Drawing after Jeffery 1990, pl. 7 (no. 4).

found there – by far the largest collection of kouroi from any one site anywhere – only four sculptors are known to have signed any of them.<sup>20</sup>

*Sample 4.* The Heraion on Samos, one of the most impressive and sculpture-rich sanctuaries of early Greece, has yielded the signatures of exactly two Archaic sculptors: Geneleos [Fig. 59] and Hortios (and we do not even what kind of monument Hortios signed).<sup>21</sup>



59. Signature of Geneleos on the robe of Phileia (her name is inscribed on the leg of her chair); c. 550 BCE. Samos, Vathy Museum. Photo (of cast on site): author.





60. Base of monument from Athenian Agora, signed by Eukheir and Euboulides; late 2nd century (IG II<sup>2</sup> 4297). Courtesy American School of Classical Studies, Agora Excavations.

*Sample 5.* There are about 760 dedicatory monuments from the Athenian Agora dating from the late Archaic, through the Classical and Hellenistic, to the Roman periods (late 6th century BCE to the 3rd century CE). Many, it is true, are badly damaged and their texts unintelligible. Still, only 33 (less than 5 percent) have recognizable signatures [Fig. 60], representing the work of only 27 named sculptors – and this from a period some seven hundred years long.<sup>22</sup>

*Sample 6.* Hellenistic portraiture seems to have been a particularly magnetic attractor of signatures: they seem to have added considerable cachet to the monuments in this most cosmopolitan of Greek eras. Still, even on Delos, where the number of portraits burgeoned in the Sanctuary of Apollo and along the *dromos* (the broad avenue between the South Stoa and Stoa of Philip) in the 3rd and 2nd centuries, more statues were unsigned than signed – in the case of the *dromos*, the breakdown is 60

to 40 percent. Some Delian portraitists were, it is true, in high demand: Hephaistion signed at least nine portraits in the late 2nd century [Fig. 61], his son Eutykhides at least eighteen. But they are two of only eight sculptors named on signed bases installed along the *dromos* from c. 240 to c. 100 BCE.<sup>23</sup>

The numbers strongly suggest, then, that the signing of Greek sculpture was uncommon and erratic in every period. But the statistics, striking though they may be, almost certainly do not tell the whole story. Obviously, there were originally many more sculptors' signatures than happen to have survived; and so, surely, the physical evidence we have is insufficient to describe ancient realities. Accidents of preservation probably distort the picture here more than in any other genre save metalwork and wall-painting, though in most cases accident had nothing to do with it (the Persians did not accidentally destroy the Acropolis in 480 BCE; the Roman general Sulla did not accidentally pillage Athens in 86 BCE; Nero did not accidentally order the looting of five hundred bronze statues from Delphi; thousands of bronze statues throughout Greece were not accidentally ripped from their bases and melted down for their raw materials at and after antiquity's end; thousands of emptied marble bases were not accidentally burned for lime or recycled as building blocks in later walls). The gaps in our evidence are often, it is true, yawning. We do not have – we cannot even read about – a single undisputed signature of the greater Polykleitos of Argos (Polykleitos the Elder, as opposed to lesser or Younger Polykleitoi who came after him).<sup>24</sup> But we do not have any original statues by the master, either – just Roman-era “copies” or adaptations [Fig. 8]. And it is impossible to believe that the sculptor who famously wrote a treatise on proportion, the nature of beauty, and *symmetria*\* – the *Kanon*, a papyrus book-roll whose “title page” (or its equivalent, a tag or *sillybos*\*) must have included his name – did not somewhere sign the lost bronze statue that he made specifically to illustrate and literally embody its theoretical principles (almost certainly the *Doryphoros*): without signatures on both book and bronze, the whole point – the connection between theory and practice – would have been lost. So, too, we have no signature of the renowned 4th-century sculptor Timotheos (though he is named in the building accounts of the Temple of Asklepios at Epidauros) or the great 4th-century sculptor (and architect) Skopas,<sup>25</sup> or the painter and sculptor Euphranor (though we do have a large portion of what is probably his marble Apollo Patroos from the Agora). But we are told that Euphranor also wrote treatises on *symmetria* and colors (we presume he claimed authorship), and we know that his son, the minor sculptor Sostratos, signed at least three statue bases: if the son, why not the father?<sup>26</sup> There are, besides, many indications in our ancient literary sources of a wealth of signed works in cities and sanctuaries large and small. Even fictional





61. Base of portrait statue of Epigenes, signed by Hephaistion, son of Myron. *ID* 1643. Delos, 127/6 BCE. Courtesy Sheila Dillon.

characters comment upon them. In Herodas' *Fourth Mimiambus* (c. 250 BCE), two women visit a shrine of Asklepios and one (Kynno) points out to the other a statue base with the signatures of the sons of Praxiteles (presumably Kephisodotos and Timarkhos): "do you not see those letters on the base?" she says. Whether the setting of the poem is an imaginary Asklepieion or a real one (the sanctuary on Kos, perhaps), such experiences must have been common.<sup>27</sup>

Often, it is true, the quite historical Pausanias merely reports what he is told by his local guides, and sometimes not even the guides have any information about the artists: Pausanias must occasionally contend with gaps in institutional memory or lapses in oral traditions, with no signatures to help.<sup>28</sup> In Pausanias' day, it seems, most visitors to major sanctuaries would have been told what they were seeing. Still, Pausanias was not your average tourist, and

when signatures were there, he seems, for the most part, to have read them, even if he does not regularly report doing so.<sup>29</sup> And so one easily imagines Pausanias furiously jotting down names of all kinds as he toured, say, Olympia and its forest of statues. In fact, we do not have to imagine it. When he notes a statue of Zeus near the Bouleuterion dedicated by the Greeks who defeated the Persians at Plataia, he records at great length the list of cities inscribed on its pedestal and, at the end, notes that the statue was made by Anaxagoras of Aegina: Pausanias undoubtedly knew that because the otherwise text-rich base included a signature.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, when he notes that a group of Herakles and the Nemean lion was dedicated by Hippotion of Taranto and was made by Nikodamos of Mainalos, the information must have come from the preserved inscribed base.<sup>31</sup> When he describes the great Early Classical Akhaian Monument that spanned the Sacred Way near the southeast corner of the Temple of Zeus, with eight bronze heroes about to draw lots from Nestor's helmet to see who will fight Hektor, he records not only the inscription on the base:

*To Zeus the Akhaians dedicated these statues,  
the descendants of godlike Pelops, son of Tantalos.*

but also the signature of the immodest sculptor engraved into Idomeneus' shield:

*This is one of many works by the cunning Onatas,  
the Aeginetan, the son Mikon sired.*<sup>32</sup>

And when he visits the grove of the Muses on Mt. Helikon and comes upon, first, a group of the goddesses by Kephisodotos, then three more Muses by Kephisodotos, then another three by Strongylion (late 5th century), and then another three by Olympiosthenes (about whom we know nothing else), it is hard to see how he could have identified the artists without information supplied by signed bases.<sup>33</sup>

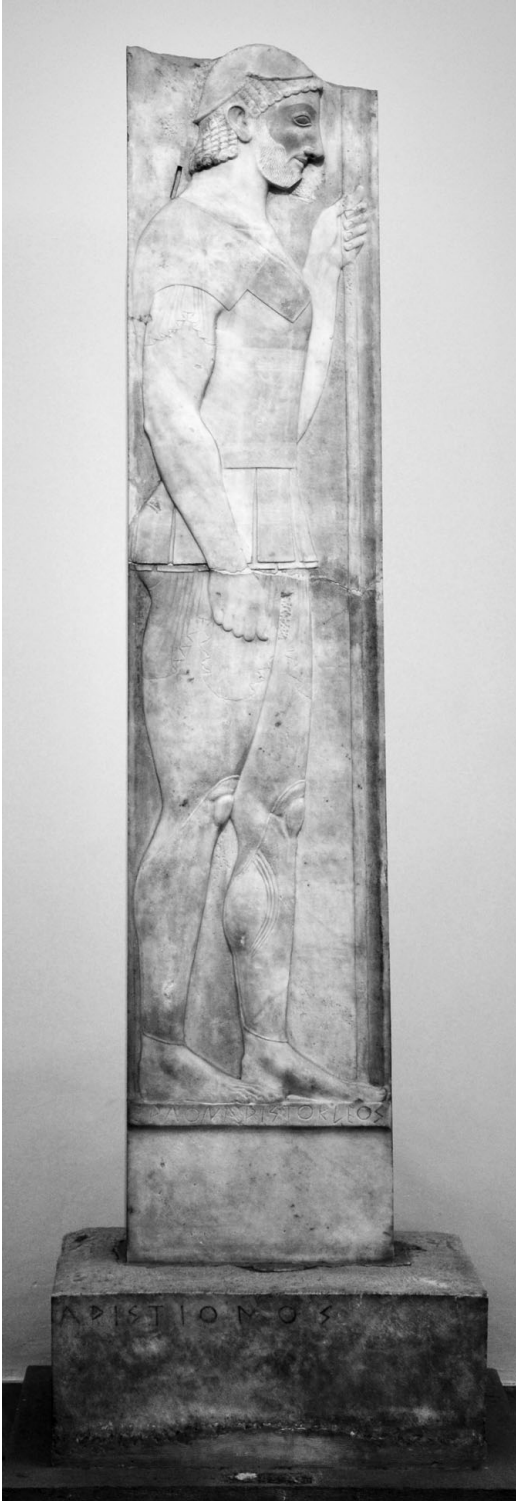
The impulse for self-identification among Greek sculptors of all periods may not have been irresistible, but it was not weak, either. And beginning with Euthykartides [Fig. 1], many Greek sculptors sign their works (or have someone else inscribe their names for them) in a variety of different ways and places.

1. They can inscribe their names directly upon the bodies of their statues or upon the frames of their figured reliefs (as opposed to their bases). The Boiotian [...]OTOS, for example, signed his early korē on the lower edge of her garment directly below the dedication to Apollo Ptoos (the letters are all of the same size and style, and the signature is probably an autograph) [Fig. 58], and the Naxian Nasstiades carved his name into the belt of his early kouros from Delos.<sup>34</sup> In the Archaic period this practice seems especially popular in east Greece: EUDEMOS ME EPOIEN (*Eudemos made me*) is written along the arm of the throne occupied by one of the so-called Branchidai from Didyma,



62. The Belvedere Torso, signed (on the rock, below the legs) by Apollonios, son of Nestor, the Athenian. c. 50 BCE. Vatican 1192. Photo: author.

and the retrograde  $\text{H}\bar{\epsilon}\text{MAS EPOI}\bar{\epsilon}\text{SE GENELEOS}$  (*Geneleos made us*) appears on the front of the mantle of the seated female figure from his six-figure group portrait on Samos (her name, Phileia, is cut less conspicuously into the leg of her chair) [Fig. 59].<sup>35</sup> But sculptors continue to sign their statues directly from time to time down to (and past) the Hellenistic period: again, Onatas (calling himself *sophos*) signed the shield of Idomeneus at Olympia in the early 5th century; Boethos of Kalchedon signed the shaft of his bronze herm from the Mahdia shipwreck; *Apollonios, son of Nestor, the Athenian, made [it]* is inscribed upon the rocky seat of the powerful Belvedere torso (c. 50 BCE) [Fig. 62]; and, later still, *Athanadoros, son of Hagesandros, and Hagesandros, son of Paionios*,



63. Funerary Stele of Aristion, by Aristokles. c. 510 BCE. Athens, National Museum 29. Photo: author.

and Polydoros the son of Polydoros, Rhodians, made this is inscribed on the panel on the side of the ship of the Skylla group from Sperlonga [Fig. 7].<sup>36</sup>

It bears repeating that (outside of Attica) dedications and the names of subjects were commonly engraved directly onto statues, too.<sup>37</sup> There are, again, the dedications on the Mantiklos Apollo and the Nikandre korē and the one written above [...]OTOS' signature on his korē from the Ptoon [Fig. 58]. There is the dedication of Pythias of Akraiphia and Aiskhrion written in two lines down the left thigh of Ptoon 20, with two more lines about Apollo of the silver bow written down his right (there is no signature anywhere, but one might have appeared on the kouros' missing lower legs or base).<sup>38</sup> There are Kheramyēs' dedications written on the front of his several korai, or Isches' cut into the left quadriceps of the colossal kouros he commissioned, or the names *Phileia*, *Philippe*, *Ornithe*, and . . . *arches* inscribed on the statues Geneleos made [Fig. 59], or the dedication of Aiakes written on the chair of a seated statue – all from Samos.<sup>39</sup> So, too, at Olympia Pausanias records that the name *Agamemnon* was engraved (retrograde) on the bronze statue of the king in Onatas' Akhaian Dedication. And there he also saw a 5th-century bronze mare (the ugliest horse in the entire sanctuary, he says, though flesh-and-blood stallions were inexplicably and passionately attracted to it) that had a dedication by Phormis of Mainalos inscribed on its flank; Pausanias also notes that the horse and the man who led it on foot were the work





64. Funerary Stele of Aristion, detail of signature of Aristokles. Photo: author.

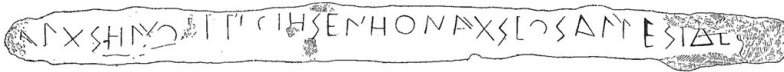
of Dionysios of Argos – information he probably gleaned from a signature on the group’s base.<sup>40</sup> Dedications and epitaphs may have been paired with signatures, or not, but a signature usually did not occur by itself. And when all that remains is a signature – LEOBIOS EPOIESEN PYRETIADES, for example, on a late Archaic base from the Acropolis, or LYSIPPOS EPO[IESE] on two signed late Classical bases from Corinth [Fig. 57] – it is not because the artist’s name was the only thing that mattered: we can be fairly confident that a dedication was inscribed directly on the bronze statue Leobios, son of Pyretiades, made and signed (probably a horse or horse and rider), and that a bronze plaque (presumably containing a dedication) was attached to at least one of the Lysippan bases.<sup>41</sup>

As for reliefs, signatures can be inscribed not on the figures themselves but along the edges or “frames” surrounding them. On the late 6th-century funerary stele of an Athenian who was, or once had been, a hoplite, the name of the deceased – ARISTIONOS (*of Aristion*, with something like *sēma* or “tomb” implied) – appears on the base, while on the lower edge of the relief itself, just below Aristion’s feet, the sculptor has signed ERGON ARISTOKLEOS (*work of Aristokles*) [Figs. 63, 64]. So, too, on the late Archaic grave stele of Mnasitheios from Akraiphia in Boiotia, a five-line-long epitaph is written vertically in the field next to the youth, but PHILOGORGOS EPOIESEN (*Philourgios made it*) appears separately below the groundline or border on which the youth stands. On the roughly contemporary Potter’s Relief from the Acropolis [Fig. 50], where a seated artisan holds a couple of cups in his hand, both dedication and signature (now reduced to a few letters each) were incised into the narrow vertical edges of the frame (the dedicator could have been Pamphaios, the



65. Funerary stele from Orchomenos (Boiotia), signed by Alxenor. c. 500 BCE. Athens, National Museum 39. Photo: author.





66. Detail of signature on funerary stele signed by Alxenor. Photo: author; drawing of inscription from Loewy 1885, no. 7.

sculptor might have been Endoios). And on the bottom edge of a late Archaic grave stele from Boiotia, an itinerant Cycladic sculptor made sure we would be impressed by the strongly foreshortened right foot of an old man leaning on his staff and tempting his dog with a bug: the inscription reads *Alxenor of Naxos made [me]. Simply behold!* [Figs. 65, 66]. The brief but grandiloquent imperative (it echoes a phrase in the *Iliad*) converts the signature into a Homeric hexameter, and it is the only text to survive: the name of the deceased must have appeared on another section of the (damaged) frame or on the stele's base.<sup>42</sup>

2. Sculptors on occasion signed the plinths of their statues (either the block-like supports carved out of the same stone as, and of a piece with, the figures standing above, or the bronze plates atop which bronze statues stood, as opposed to separately carved stone bases). There are several damaged and obscure inscriptions written across the tops of the plinths (both beside and between the feet) of the twin marble kouroi still best known as Kleobis and Biton at Delphi (c. 580 BCE). We do not know which one is Kleobis and which Biton, but on the edge of the plinth of "Statue B" is the retrograde signature [*Poly*]medes the Argive made [*us*] [Fig. 67].<sup>43</sup> More texts might have been written upon the base (or bases) into which the statues and their plinths were set. An under-life-size bronze statue dedicated at Olympia c. 500 BCE



67. Plinth of Statue B (either Kleobis or Biton), signed by [Poly]medes of Argos; c. 580 BCE. Delphi 467, 1524. Photo: author.

by the city of Byzantion stood on a bronze plate, inscribed with the signature of Pelanidas of Aigina, that was itself set into a limestone base.<sup>44</sup> And centuries later, the signature *[Alex- or Ages]andros, son of Menides, from Antioch on the Meander, made [it]* was engraved on the (broken) plinth of the famous late 2nd-century Aphrodite from Melos (a.k.a. the Venus de Milo) in the Louvre.<sup>45</sup>

3. But, of course, most signatures, by far, are found on bases – low blocks of stone, high blocks, round blocks, pillars, columns, and so on. They can be engraved into the flutes of columnar bases where dedication and signature are separated only by sharp arrises. On a column that probably supported Acropolis Kore 602, for example,

OPS[IOS] ANETHEKEN: HO A[...]

is written vertically (left to right, top to bottom) in a central flute and

PHILER[GOS] EPOIESEN

is engraved in the flute immediately to the left (in a sense, “below” the dedication) [Fig. 68]. Both of these lines were cut by the same hand – probably the sculptor’s. But two flutes to the right of the dedication (and so “above” it), there is a second signature:

ENDOIOS EPO[IESEN]

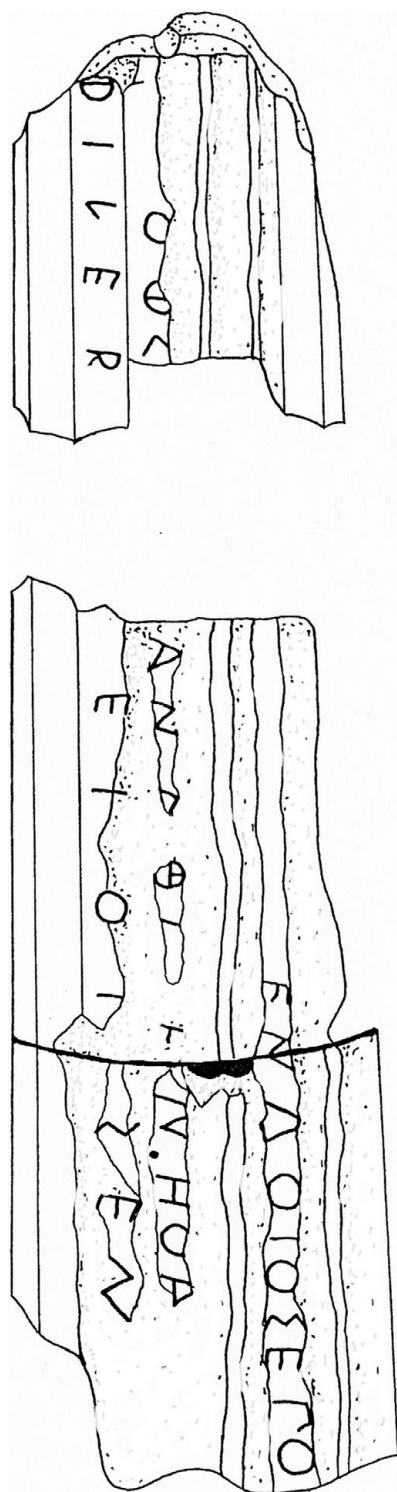
written in a different hand, and the best explanation is that Opsios commissioned a statue from the workshop of the master Endoios, that the work was executed (and the initial texts inscribed) by a member of his shop, Philergos, but that after completion Opsios requested that the renowned Endoios add his own name, and that the master complied in his own hand (though leaving an empty flute between the dedication and his own signature). That is, Philergos, the actual sculptor of the statue, took credit for his work, but the dedicant wanted the additional prestige of Endoios' name affixed to the monument.<sup>46</sup> If this reading is correct, *epoiesen* can on rare occasions mean for sculptures what it can sometimes mean for vases: "this came out of the workshop of X."

A few other Acropolis monuments were also inscribed by more than one letterer. Around 500, for example, an under-life-size statue (probably an Athena) was installed atop a tall fluted column engraved with the inscription:

PYTHIS EPOIESEN.  
EPITELES ANETHEKEN: APARKHEN  
ATHENAIAl.

Signature and dedication were written (vertically, in three adjacent flutes) by very different hands – the letters of the signature are noticeably smaller and in a less precise style – and that suggests that Pythis autographed the monument, either before presenting it to Epiteles (who presumably hired a mason to carve his dedication to Athena from the first fruits [*aparkhen*] of his labors) or afterward, at Epiteles' request [Fig. 69].<sup>47</sup> And on a later column supporting another under-life-size Athena (c. 470 BCE), three adjacent flutes contain the vertical lines

ANGELITOS M'ANETHE[KEN . . .]  
[POTNI'] ATHENAIAl: KHEKH[ARISTHO  
SOI TODE DORON?]  
EUVENOR EPOIESEN.<sup>48</sup>



68. Fragmentary columnar base supporting a dedication by Opsios, signed by Philergos and Endoios. Athens, Epigraphical Museum 29. Drawing after Viviers 1992, fig. 5.



69. Columnar base for dedication of Epiteles, signed by Pythis. Acropolis Museum 9, 136.  
Photo courtesy H. R. Goette.



70. Inscribed base of Athena dedicated by Angelitos, signed by Euenor; c. 470 BCE. Acropolis Museum 140. Photo: author, by permission of D. Pantermalis and the Acropolis Museum.

Dedication (first two lines) and signature (last line) are again the works of different letterers, and so it is likely that the Euenor's signature (like those of Philergos, Endoios, and Pythis before it) was an autograph [Pl. XIII, Fig. 70]. In the case of Euthykartides' rough triangular base, again, the inscription begins on the top and descends down the left side, drawing the viewer (who was also a reader) away from a purely frontal experience of the kouros above [Pl. I, Fig. 1]. In the case of rectangular bases, signatures can occasionally be written on the upper surface of the block, like the signatures of a Polykleitos – almost certainly the Younger – engraved beside the feet of bronze statues of Pythokles of Elis and Aristion of Argos at Olympia.<sup>49</sup> And they can be written on the sides of bases, around the corner from the dedication or epitaph. This is, again, a habit of Aristion of Paros [Fig. 56], but he is not alone: at least 14 monuments from the Acropolis had dedication and signature inscribed on different faces of the stone. There is, for example, the pillar base for a bronze horse, or horse and rider, dedicated by Timarkhos (the dedication is engraved on a narrow side of the base) and made by Onatas (whose signature is found by itself on the





71. Signature of Onatas on a pillar base supporting a dedication of Timarkhos. Athens, Epigraphical Museum 6263. Photo: author.

broad left side of the abacus [Fig. 71]).<sup>50</sup> Such a separation clearly distinguishes signature and dedication, but it is not a matter of banishing the artist to a less important side of the monument, minimizing his role or subordinating it to the dedicant's. In fact, the viewer had a better perspective on the bronze horse from the side with Onatas' signature, and it is possible that the tactic was meant to encourage the viewer to move around the monument and so appreciate it from more than one point of view, as well as to call attention to the artist's name on its own terms.<sup>51</sup>

But, of course, signatures are most often inscribed across the front face of the base in some kind of direct relationship with a dedicatory or funerary text. In the Archaic and Classical periods it is common to have dedication and signature written together in one continuous textual "block" – that is, in a formation of equally spaced, stylistically homogeneous lines, with little or no typographical or even syntactical distinction between them. So, for example, on a base in New York dated c. 550 BCE, there is an elegiac couplet written *boustrophēdon* in just over two lines (the inscription thus ignores the poetic form) [Fig. 72]:

KHAIREDEMO TODE SEMAO PATER ESTE[SE  
TH]ANONTOS ANPHIKHAR <E>S AGATHON PAIDA O <L>  
OPHYROMENO[S] PHAIDIMOS EPOIE

*Upon the death of Khairedemos, his father  
Amphikhares set up this marker, mourning  
a good son. Phaidimos made [it].*





72. Base for funerary monument of Khairedemos by Phaidimos, c. 550 BCE. (Phaidimos' retrograde signature appears at the end of the last line). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 16.174.6. Photo: author.

The signature PHAIDIMOS EPOIE (though it is prose, not poetry) shares the last line with the word concluding the couplet and is written by the same hand, in letters of the same scale.<sup>52</sup> On the base of a funerary korē that Phaidimos made for the grave of a girl named Philē (c. 550 BCE) [Fig. 73],



73. Base of the funerary korē of Philē, signed by Phaidimos, c. 550 BCE. Athens, National Museum 81. Photo: author.



74. Base of the funerary monument of Lampito, signed by Endoios, c. 525 BCE. Athens, Epigraphical Museum 10643. Photo: author; drawing of inscription from Loewy 1885, no. 8.

there is another elegiac couplet (probably cut by the same hand that inscribed Phrasikleia's epitaph, Fig. 55), but this time a different verb has been chosen (ERGASATO instead of the usual EPOIE) so that the signature properly scans:

... ME PHILES PAIDOS  
KATETHEKEN KALON IDEN  
AFUTAR PHAIDIMOS ERGASATO

*... set me up, a monument,  
beautiful to behold, of his daughter Phile.  
But Phaidimos made [me].*

That is, the signature is incorporated into the dactylic pentameter that concludes the epigram: it is metrically a continuation of the poem, not a prose appendage as it is on the base in New York. On the stone itself, the last of the three inscribed lines is devoted to the signature alone (written in letters as fine, deep, and large as the rest), but PHAIDIMOS ERGASATO is preceded by a punctuation mark (three vertical dots) and a conjunction – *aFutar* (“but,” “and yet”) – that establish a quick (and somewhat jarring) transition from the words of sorrow above.<sup>53</sup> So, too, in the inscription on the funerary monument of Lampito [Fig. 74], the third and last line begins with the end of an elegiac couplet – the inscription again ignores the verse form – but it concludes with ENDOIOS EPOIESEN, written in letters of the same size and style (only a punctuation mark separates epitaph from signature):

[...]DE PHI[...] KATETHE  
KE THANOSAN: L[AMPI]TO AIDOIEN GES AP  
O PATROIES: ENDOIOS EPOIESEN.



75. Base for a dedication of Phsakythe, signed by Hermippos; c. 500 BCE. Athens, Epigraphical Museum 6250. Photo: author.

*Here lies buried the dead L[ampi]to,  
an honorable woman, far from her  
homeland. Endoios made [it].*

Endoios' signature, in other words, is technically not part of the poem, yet it shares the last line with the poem's last word. It is once again integrated into a continuous text; it and the epitaph form a single graphic formation or block. And there are Classical fusions of dedication and signature, too: on a base from the Acropolis datable to c. 450 BCE the second line of Peikon's dedication to Athena evidently ended with [KRES]ILAS EPOIE.<sup>54</sup>

It is common Archaic and Early Classical practice for the first word of the dedication to be the name of the dedicant, and for the last words of the text to be the signature of the sculptor, given its own line directly below the dedication, with the same spacing and epigraphically identical letters.<sup>55</sup> The simplest formula is found on a low base from the Acropolis (c. 500 BCE) – it once supported three bronze statuettes – where the text is inscribed *stoikhēdon* and is thus a single typographical unit [Fig. 75]:

PHSAKYTHE ANETHEKEN.  
HERMIPPOS EPOIESEN.

*Phsakythe dedicated [me].  
Hermippos made [me]*<sup>56</sup>

The same formula is repeated over and over again, as, for example, in the *stoikhēdon* inscription on the base of a lost bronze statue representing and dedicated by an extraordinary champion boxer at Olympia, made and signed by Pythagoras of Samos around 470 BCE, and, in Pausanias' opinion, "well worth seeing":

EUTHYMOS LOKROS APO ZEPHYRIO ANETHEKE  
PYTHAGORAS SAMIOS EPOIESEN

*Euthymos the Lokrian, from Zephyrion, dedicated [me].  
Pythagoras of Samos made [me].*<sup>57</sup>



76. Base for funerary monument of Xenophantes, signed by Aristokles. Kerameikos Museum I 389. Photo: author.

And the formula bears expansion: on the late 6th-century funerary monument of Xenophantes [Fig. 76], ARISTOKLES EPOIESEN occupies the entire last line of a five-line text, and the letters of the signature are as big and as deeply cut as those of the epitaph directly above (though they seem written in a different hand – the sculptor’s own, presumably).<sup>58</sup> Signature and epitaph once again constitute a single textual block: there is no spatial and little typographical distinction between them.

And no such distinction is found on various Early Classical monuments signed by such well-known sculptors as Kalamis or the famous team of Kritios and Nesiotes. On the base of a statue of Aphrodite that Pausanias saw inside the Propylaia, for example, there is the simple four-line, four-word *stoikhēdon* inscription

[KAL]LIAS  
[ANE]THEKE.  
[KAL]AMIS  
[EPOE].

*Kallias*  
*dedicated [it].*  
*Kalamis*  
*made [it].*



77. Base of funerary monument of Leanax of Samos, signed by Philergos. Courtesy 3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Athens (M 662) © Ministry of Culture and Sports, Archaeological Receipts Fund.

with the names of dedicant and artist identical in size and style, while another Acropolis base that supported a bronze statue of a *hoplitodromos* (an armed runner) is inscribed in two lines, *stoikhēdon*:

EPIKHARINOS ANETHEKEN HO OPH[OL]O[NIDO]  
KRITIOS KAI NESIOTES EPO[IE]SATEN

*Epikharinos, son of Opholonides, dedicated [this].*  
*Kritios and Nesiotes made [it].*

Again the names of dedicant and sculptors are typographically equivalent. The same double signature appears elsewhere on the Acropolis – for example, as the last of six lines on a rectangular base for the dedication of Hegelokhos (a bronze action statue commemorating Ekphantos), and as the last of three lines on a circular base for the dedication of Aristes and Ophsios (probably an Athena standing at rest).<sup>59</sup> It is likely that all the bases signed by Kritios and Nesiotes were engraved by the same letterer – a member of their atelier, perhaps, one who treated dedication and signature as elements of the same continuous text, with equal spacing between all lines.

Still, typographic distinctions between dedication or epitaph, on the one hand, and signature, on the other, often appear in the 6th and 5th centuries. There is, for example, the very unusual case of the late 6th-century funerary monument of Leanax: a (lost) seated statue upon a wide, inscribed base [Fig. 77]. The first two lines of the text tell us that the deceased was a Samian of noble birth who died far from his loved ones – this, after all, is an Athenian monument. The third and last line is the signature PHILERGOS EPOIESEN, but the letters are much more deeply cut and are nearly twice as high as those of the comparatively understated epitaph (4.5 to 2.5 centimeters), so the signature overshadows the lines above. The epitaph still comes first and occupies the top of the stone, and both epitaph and signature were evidently cut by the same hand. But they are not of the same kind, and it is the signature (and the artist), not the epitaph (and the dead), that grabs the attention of the





78. Base of the funerary kouros of Neilonides, signed by Endoios, c. 530–20 BCE. Athens, Epigraphical Museum 12870. Endoios' vandalized signature was written vertically, at left, the epitaph at upper right. Photo: author.

viewer/reader. It is possible, in fact, that the engraver of both texts was, again, Philergos himself – now, apparently, out from under the shadow of Endoios [cf. Fig. 68].<sup>60</sup>

The Archaic and Classical letterer clearly had a number of epigraphic options from which to choose, and it is the variety of formats that needs emphasizing. He could, for example, abandon the single text “block” formation and separate dedication (or epitaph) and signature, either by putting the signature on a different side of the base (as in the case of Aristion of Paros, Figs. 55, 56) or Onatas [Fig. 71], or by putting signature and epitaph on opposite sides of a figure and orienting them differently (as on the base of the funerary kouros of Neilonides made by Endoios c. 530–520 BCE, Fig. 78),<sup>61</sup> or simply by putting empty space between them, thus establishing a balance or juxtaposition between the texts rather than a linear sequence or continuum. On the short end of a long base for a marble horse (or horse and rider) set up on the Acropolis c. 510–500 BCE, a simple dedication (as usual beginning with the name of the dedicant) occupies three lines at the top

EGESAN[DROS]  
ANETHEK[EN]  
TATHENAIAI.

*Hegesandros*  
*dedicated [me]*  
*To Athena.*





79. Base for a dedication by Hegesandros from the Acropolis, signed by Gorgias; c. 510–500. Athens, Epigraphical Museum 6244. Photo: author.

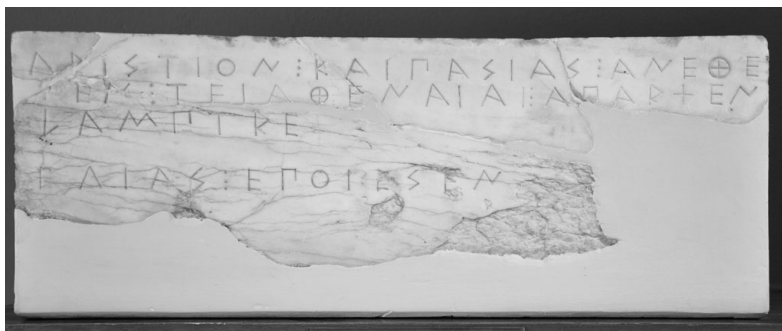
while the artist's signature

[G]ORGIAS EPO[IESEN]

*Gorgias made [me].*

appears by itself considerably below, across uninscribed, vacant stone [Fig. 79].<sup>62</sup> The letters of Gorgias' signature are still in the same style and are of the same size as those in the dedication above, but the distance seems to establish an equivalence or parity between the names of dedicant and artist. A little earlier, perhaps, on the base of a massive Acropolis korē (probably an Athena) dedicated by Nearkhos [Pl. X] – possibly but not certainly the same Nearkhos who potted and painted vases earlier in the century [Fig. 38]<sup>63</sup> – dedication and signature are “justified” flush left:

NEARKHOS ANETHEKE[N HO KERAME]  
US ERGON APARKHEN TAT[ENAI AI]



80. Base of dedication of Aristion and Pasias, signed by Hegias; c. 490–480 BCE. Athens, Epigraphical Museum 6299+6247. Photo: author.

ANTENOR EP[OIESEN H  
O EUMAROS T[O AGALMA]

*Nearkhos the potter [?] dedicated  
this work from the first fruits to Athena.*

*Antenor, son of Eumares,  
made the statue.*

But the signature is placed a little more than 4 centimeters below the dedication, and the letters (though clearly cut by the same mason) are a little smaller, too.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, while both the dedication and the signature are each engraved *stoikhēdon*, each is plotted according to its own distinct grid. All in all, the Gorgias and Antenor bases are two of many that suggest an emerging conceptual separation of signature from dedication in the late 6th century. And the trend continues into the early 5th century with such monuments as one dedicated by Aristion and Pasias and made by Hegias [Fig. 80]. The sculptor's signature is located one line or space below the dedication, though in this case its letters are of the same size and are cut to the same depth as the text above.<sup>65</sup>

Such a separation does not necessarily diminish the “presence” of the sculptor: on an Early Classical pillar monument from the Acropolis, for example, Euphron's signature is set considerably below the five-line dedication, but its font size is much larger, which emphasizes Euphron's role in the creation of the votive.<sup>66</sup> Still, well into the 5th century options remain open, even for different monuments made by the same artist. On the base of Pyres' dedication to Pallas Athena (often dated to c. 450–440), the signature appears as the last of three evenly spaced lines all cut by the same hand:

[TONDE PYRE]S ANETHEKE POLUMNESTO PHILO[S HUIOS]  
EUXAMENOS DEKATEN PALLADI TRITOGENEI.  
KYDONIETAS KRESILAS ERGASSATO.

The first line is a dactylic hexameter, the second a pentameter. The signature (*Kresilas of Kydonia made [it]*) is itself an iambic trimeter, so it is part of a single



81. Dedication and signature on the Hermolykos base (IG I<sup>3</sup> 883), c. 410 BCE. From Loewy 1885, no. 46.

epigraphical and poetic (but non-*stoikhēdon*) formation.<sup>67</sup> But on the base of another statue by Kresilas dedicated on the Acropolis, dedication and signature (both carved *stoikhēdon*, neither poetic) have completely different alignments [Fig. 81]. The three-line dedication by Hermolykos, son of Dietrephes, is above (as we would expect) and is aligned along the left-hand edge of the block. But Kresilas' two-word, two-line signature is not only placed at some distance below the dedication, but is also shifted to the right, so that it is centered on the stone; its letters are on a smaller scale, too. As a result, the emphasis seems to oscillate between dedication and signature: the centrality and symmetry of KRESILAS EPOESEN seem to privilege the sculptor, but the smaller size of its font makes the signature seem subsidiary to the dedication.<sup>68</sup>

At the end of the 5th century signatures can still be written contiguous to, and in the same style and size as, the associated dedication. Around 430 (or a little later), for example, the Athenian *demos* dedicated a statue of Athena (in her role as Hygieia, goddess of health) on a circular base that was cut away to fit against the southeast corner of the Propylaia [Figs. 82, 83]. The two-line text reads:

ATHENAIOI TEI ATHENAI AI TEI HYGIEIAI  
PYRROS EPOIESEN ATHENAIOS

*The Athenians, to Athena Hygieia.  
Pyrrhos the Athenian made [it].*

The inscription is not the finest example of Attic epigraphy that we have (the lines are not quite horizontal, for example), and the difficulty of engraving a curved surface may have had something to do with that. But the dedication once again occupies the top line (and the name of the dedicant – ATHENAI OI, *the Athenians* – is once again the first word); the signature of Pyrrhos the Athenian is once again inscribed directly but asymmetrically below; and the letters in both lines are of the same size and depth.<sup>69</sup> The



82. Base of a statue of Athena Hygieia, dedicated by the Athenian people and made by Pyrrhos; c. 430–425 BCE. Acropolis. Photo: author.

base displays the kind of linear (and hierarchical) sequencing of dedication and signature that had been familiar since the 6th century.

But not much later the base of a monument on the grounds east of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia was engraved with an inscription that in some ways anticipates a format that will dominate in the late Classical and Hellenistic periods. On the bottom block of a tall triangular pillar that supported a spectacular winged marble Nike descending dramatically from heaven to announce a victory in the Peloponnesian War, there is the text [Pl. XIV]:

*The Messenians and Naupaktians dedicated [this] to  
Olympian Zeus, a tithe from the spoils of war.*

*Paionios of Mende made [me or this]  
and was victor [in the competition] to make the akroteria for the temple.*

There is a gap of a few centimeters between dedication and signature. The alignment of the signature is different, too: it is indented, shifted a little to the right. But it is the tiny size of its letters that stands out: signatures had occasionally been smaller than associated dedications before [cf. Pl. X], but not as small as this.<sup>70</sup> It would be tempting to conclude that the contribution

ΑΘΕΝΑΙΟΙΤΕΙΑΘΕΝΑΙΑΤΤΕΙΥΛΙΕΙΑΙ  
ΠΥΡΡΟΣΕΠΟΙΗΣΕΝΑΘΕΝΑΙΟΣ

83. Inscription on the Athena Hygieia base. From Loewy 1885, 45 (no. 53).



84. Base for a bronze tripod commemorating a victory in the *anthippasia* competition, signed by Bryaxis; c. 350 BCE. Athens, National Museum 1733. Photo: author.

of the sculptor to the monument is being minimized through typography, except that the dedication itself is also very small compared to the size of the block on which it is carved (much less the height of the entire monument), that Paionios' signature is still fairly conspicuous on the front of the base (it would have been even clearer when the engraved letters were filled with red paint), and that the signature, though unusually small, is also unusually long and informative, boasting of Paionios' victory in a competition to make the *akroteria* (roof ornaments) for the nearby Temple of Zeus – just as the Messenians and Naupaktians commemorated their defeat of the Spartans in 425 BCE with the Nike they commissioned Paionios to carve. Statue, dedication, and signature are all about victory, and whoever inscribed the text is hardly diminishing or marginalizing the sculptor's role or status.<sup>71</sup> If such marginalization were the point, the signature of Paionios would not be there in the first place. But it *is* there, because the name of the sculptor and the nature of his success mattered: the signature, read aloud, bestowed *kleos* upon him, and the golden glow reflected back upon the Messenians and Naupaktians themselves.

And yet the small size of Paionios' signature seems to anticipate Late Classical and Hellenistic practice, when it is increasingly common to find the artist's signature not only at some distance below the dedication, but also written in letters only a centimeter high (or even less). We have already noted the format on the base that supported the statues of Spoudias and Kleiokrateia by [...]ysikles and Praxiteles [Pl. XII, Figs. 52, 53]. The signature of Bryaxis on a tripod base in Athens is another example [Fig. 84]. Bryaxis is one of four

masters said to have been responsible for the sculptures of the Mausoleion at Halikarnassos, and so he was no minor player on the stage of Late Classical sculpture. Yet the base itself is undistinguished. Three sides are carved with nearly identical and monotonous scenes of a horseman approaching a tripod (the direction of the approach is the only major difference): these reliefs, we would like to believe, are the work of a member of Bryaxis' shop rather than of the master himself, while the lost bronze tripod above would have been Bryaxis' own work. At all events, the fourth side is inscribed, above, with a deeply cut, four-line text naming three Athenian tribal commanders (*phylarchs*) who were victorious in a mock cavalry battle known as the *anthippasia* and, below, with the minuscule and faint line BRYAXIS EPOËSEN [Fig. 85].<sup>72</sup> The typography and position of the signature exemplify the standard hierarchy, in which the importance of the dedicant or honorand is greater than that of the artist (though it could still be argued that the small size of the signature paradoxically draws attention to it, necessitating a closer reading, just as the tiny integrated signatures on Syracusan coins do [cf. Pl. VI]). And the format seen on the Bryaxis base seems to harden in the Hellenistic period. On the bases of the 3rd- and 2nd-century portrait statues from the *dromos* on Delos, for example, the sculptor's signature invariably occupies a separate line well below the dedication [cf. Fig. 61]. Again, there was nothing new in that, but it is inscribed in much smaller letters as well, and though the dedication and the signature are typically cut by the same hand, that hand was usually not the artist's.<sup>73</sup> It was, again, the patron or client who usually determined what was written, who wrote it, and how.

But there are enough exceptions to suggest that, no matter how common the formula "large dedication, minuscule signature" came to be in the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods, it was not an inviolable rule. There remains, for example, Praxiteles' more emphatic signature on the Arkhippe base [Fig. 54], where the distance between dedication and signature, written on nearly the same scale, again establishes a kind of equivalence between them, not a hierarchical ranking. There are those two empty bases in Corinth, where Lysippos's signatures – the only texts cut into the stones – are relatively large (3 centimeters high) and emphatic [Fig. 57]. Another Lysippan signature, on the base of the statue of Pelopidas at Delphi, was part of a single textual formation in *stoikhēdon* – the letters of the signature are of the same size and depth as the rest. Another (now lost) Lysippan signature, on the base of a bronze statue of the champion pankratiast Agias at Pharsalos, adhered to the same *stoikhēdon* grid as the dedication above (written in elegiac couplets), but LYSIPPOS SIKYŌNIOS EPOËSEN was prominently centered one space below the dedication – seemingly set off for emphasis – and the letters were again the same size: there was no attempt to minimize the sculptor's role here.<sup>74</sup> Nor is there such an attempt on a base recently discovered at Thebes,





85. Bryaxis base, detail of signature. Photo: author.

where yet another Lysippan signature (LYSIPPOS SIKYŌNIOS EPOĒSE) occupies the line directly below the dedication (by Hippias, son of Erotion, to Zeus Soter). As they often did in the Archaic period, dedication and signature form a single typographical block which, in this case, is set considerably below another, lengthy patriotic text concerning the general whose bronze statue stood above. This distance, as well the tight pairing of the lines, emphasizes both the piety of the patron and his discernment in hiring Lysippos to do the job.<sup>75</sup> As for Hellenistic exceptions, there are a number of late 2nd-century bases from the Athenian Agora where signatures such as

DEMETRIOS PHILONOS PTELEASIOS EPOIESEN

*Demetrios, son of Philon, from Ptelea made [it]*

or

EUKHEIR KAI EUBOULIDES ATHENAIOTI EPOIESAN

*Eukheir and Euboulides, Athenians, made [it]*

appear all by themselves on the face of a stone that is otherwise uninscribed [Fig. 60]. The letters are small (they are 0.9 and 1.5 centimeters high, respectively), but the isolation of the signatures still sets the sculptors apart, emphasizing their role.<sup>76</sup>

4. One expects to find signatures on bases. But they were occasionally found in less obvious places. Somewhere inside the Parthenon, Plutarch informs us (though just where he does not say), a stele stood declaring that the great

chryselephantine Athena Parthenos (dedicated in 438 BCE) was the work of Pheidias. The statement of agency, then, appeared on a discrete object, a slab that was probably placed not far from the base of an image that was itself unsigned and textless (like most cult statues, apparently).<sup>77</sup> But we cannot in fact be sure whether the stele bore a true signature or merely a record or attribution. It is possible that Pheidias had the stele inscribed with his name and set it up himself at the time of the statue's installation, especially since we know that Pheidias scratched his name on far humbler things (like a simple black-glazed drinking cup found in his workshop at Olympia) and that "below the feet" of his slightly later but even greater chryselephantine statue of Zeus at Olympia – a wonder of the ancient world, datable to the late 430s – there was, Pausanias tells us, the simple line

PHEIDIAS KHARMIDOU HUIOS ATHENAIOS MEPOIESE

*Pheidias, son of Kharmides, an Athenian, made me.*<sup>78</sup>

It is unclear what Pausanias means by "below the feet" of the statue. But if it means on the enthroned god's footstool (decorated with gold lions and an Amazonomachy) or some other low part of the statue itself (as opposed to, say, a molding between statue and base) the signature would have been of a piece with the image above, rendered in the same technique in gold and ivory. And that would indicate that the signature on the Zeus was Pheidias' autograph, an integrated signature that was part of the fabric of a statue that was said to have added something to traditional religion (no mere *banausos*, he, this friend of Perikles and Anaxagoras, this greatest sculptor of gods). But the naming of Pheidias on the Parthenon stele seems different: it means that the Athena Parthenos was itself unsigned but still required a statement of authorship.<sup>79</sup> And so it is possible that the stele was more in the nature of a museum label, set up at some point after 438, perhaps soon after the completion of the Zeus later in the decade, as a kind of anxious Athenian response to it. The Temple of Zeus at Olympia and the Parthenon influenced and rivaled each other in a number of ways, and when the Athenians learned that Pheidias had directly signed his Zeus at Olympia, after having left their Athena unsigned, they may well have set up the stele to inform or reassure visitors to the Acropolis (Athenian and non-Athenian alike) that the great sculptor had made their chryselephantine deity, too.<sup>80</sup> The name lent the image prestige. But, in that case, Pheidias himself would have had nothing to do with it.

At Epidauros Pausanias saw an inscription (*epigraphē*) stating that the early 4th-century chryselephantine cult statue of Asklepios – half the size of the Zeus at Olympia – was the work of Thrasymedes, son of Arignotos, of Paros. He neglects to tell us whether the text was found on the statue itself, its base, or on a separate stele, and so we cannot be sure the signature was an autograph.<sup>81</sup>



86. Detail of inscribed shield from north frieze of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi; c. 525 BCE. Photo: author.

But he does tell us that in a temple near the Pompeion, at the northwest corner of Athens, there were statues of Demeter, Kore, and a torch-bearing Iakhos, and that “an inscription in Attic letters on the wall declares that they are the works of Praxiteles.” A wall is an even more unusual place for the signature of a sculptor than a free-standing stele, and it is possible that an inscribed plaque was put there during a restoration of the temple centuries after Praxiteles.<sup>82</sup>

5. Finally, signatures are found even on architectural sculptures, though very rarely. The only certain Archaic instance appears on the north frieze of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi (c. 525 BCE), where a sculptor signed his name around the rim of a shield of a giant labeled (in paint, originally) Alektos: he advances in a phalanx of three against Apollo and Artemis [Fig. 86]. The artist clearly took credit for the sculptures on this side and the back (or east side) of the building as well, since the signature concludes with

... TADE KAI TOPISTHEN EPOIE

... *made these and those behind.*

It is the beginning of the signature that is the problem. The name of the sculptor is virtually impossible to read, first, because the letters of the inscription were at some point deliberately altered with additional lines or strokes, making them look more like decorative signs than letters (this is called ‘foxing’)<sup>83</sup> and,

second, because this part of the shield has been broken off, taking almost all of the sculptor's name with it. It is not clear whether the foxing of the letters was an attempt to artfully disguise the name (in which case it could have been done, coyly, by the sculptor himself)<sup>84</sup> or to make it unreadable (in which case it could have been done by someone unfavorably disposed toward the sculptor). It is, besides, a remarkable coincidence that it is precisely this section of the shield that has been so badly damaged. At all events, Endoios, Daippos, Aristion of Paros, and Boupalos have all been proposed (with almost equal ingenuity) as candidates for the sculptor, also known more prosaically as "Master B."<sup>85</sup> But whoever he was, he was stylistically far more progressive – his figures and compositions exhibit impressive foreshortening and overlapping – than the sculptor responsible for the flatter, more linear reliefs on the south and west sides of the treasury (as far as we know this "Master A" did not sign his work). And so Master B's signature might have been a self-conscious assertion of his skill, a way of distinguishing himself from his more conservative colleague and, we might guess, rival. We continue to wonder whether the foxing of Master B's name was the result of clever modesty, professional jealousy, or punishment for artistic *hybris*. But no explanation inspires much confidence.

The only other possibility for a signature in Archaic architectural sculpture is found at Eretria. Three letters (. . . ESE . . .) are, as we have seen, cut into the wheel of Theseus's chariot in the west pediment of the Temple of Apollo Daphnephoros (c. 490 BCE), and if they do not belong to a label (THESEUS), they most likely belong to the verb EPOIESE.<sup>86</sup>

We have names associated with the elaborate sculptural programs of the 5th century. Pausanias (problematically) credits Alkamenes with the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus and (erroneously) attributes the east pediment to Paionios. Plutarch implies that Pheidias was in charge of the entire Parthenon project and its sculptures (though the only work we know for a fact that he made for the building was the Athena Parthenos inside it, and the only other Parthenon sculptor we know by name was his assistant Menon, who falsely accused Pheidias of embezzlement). And there are a number of sculptors (both Athenians and resident aliens) listed in the building accounts of the Erechtheion: Phryomachos of Kephissia, Praxias resident at Melite, Antiphanes of Kerameis, and others who made figures for the temple's frieze.<sup>87</sup> But an actual signature does not appear again in architectural sculpture until the great monument of the Late Classical period: the towering, sculpture-rich Mausoleion at Halikarnassos (c. 360–350 BCE).

It is not a signature we would expect. Pliny informs us that the sculptures of the monument were the work of the renowned Skopas (east side), Bryaxis (north), Timotheos (south), and Leokhares (west), though Vitruvius' roster replaces Timotheos with Praxiteles.<sup>88</sup> But if these Late Classical masters signed anything on this wonder of the ancient world – and they were probably

responsible for the colossal ancestral portraits and other statues that populated the various levels of the structure – the inscriptions are not extant. The one signature that does survive – a modest, cursive APOLLO [. . .] EP[OIEI] – was inscribed by a lesser member of one of their teams. It is cut into a block of the crowning course of the so-called Chariot Frieze, a well-executed but monotonous Pentelic marble strip (c. 85 centimeters high) of at least 20 nearly identical slabs, with nearly identical charioteers driving nearly identical four-horse chariots, that was almost certainly placed around the top of the wall behind the colonnade, high up on the 45-meter-tall monument (and so essentially out of sight for anyone standing on the ground). Presumably, other frieze sculptors signed their work, too, and, presumably, the signed block that survives corresponded to a slab that Apollo[nios?] himself carved just below. But, given the signature's near invisibility even from the floor of the colonnade (some 7 meters below), it hard to know whom he was trying to impress – unless it was just himself, his co-workers, the master sculptor for whom he worked, or a judge. For it is possible that Apollo[nios?] and his fellows were engaged in a competition in which the most skillful or efficient sculptor was awarded a prize: their signatures marked their entries.<sup>89</sup>

If the Mausoleion was the great monument of the Late Classical period, the so-called Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon (c. 180–160 BCE) – it may in fact have been a *heroon* (hero shrine) or an altar sacred to all the gods – was the great monument of the Hellenistic era. Around the inside wall of the upper court there was a continuous narrative frieze relating the story of the local hero Telephos; on the outside of the high base or podium there was a grandiose frieze (2.3 meters high, 130 meters long) representing a tumultuous and melodramatic Gigantomachy. It is not known who the designer or architect of the monument was (Menekrates is one of the usual suspects), or whether there was a single overseer in charge of the many teams that must have executed its sculptures. But, just as the gods and giants were identified by labels engraved into architectural moldings above and below them (GE is, exceptionally, engraved into the background next to a frantic Earth, mother of the giants, Fig. 25), so the sculptors who carved them identified themselves, and they did so in the usual format: *Orestes, son of Orestes of Pergamon, made [this]*, reads one (he carved Hephaistos on the north frieze). There must have been dozens of such signatures: as it is, fragments of 16 are preserved, mostly engraved on the socle below the frieze, below the names of the giants – and so very easy to read. Besides the local Orestes, the names Dionysiades and Menekrates (who worked together), possibly Melanippos, and one whose name is lost but who says he was the “son of Athenaios” appear there. But at least one sculptor, Theorrrhetos, had to sign on an upper molding on the southwest wing, above a passage where Nymphs do battle with snaky-legged giants (in truly baroque fashion) directly upon the great flight of steps, where



there is no socle to sign [Pl. XV]. At all events, given the large number of well-cut and originally paint-filled labels and signatures, the visitor was invited to “read” the frieze like a text, with its own scholarly apparatus – Pergamon, after all, was the home of a major Hellenistic library. Two other early 2nd-century monuments with reliefs (a tomb on Rhodes, an elaborate altar at Knidos) also bore their sculptors’ signatures.<sup>90</sup> But the Pergamon Altar’s extensive texting has only one real (if much smaller) precedent: the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi, with its densely labeled east and north friezes (and its single signature, Fig. 86), carved more than three and a half centuries before.<sup>91</sup>

#### REITERATIONS

1. *The signing of sculpture followed no rules.* Again, in no period and in no place was signing sculpture obligatory, and even when there is signing there are no discernible principles governing it (besides the obvious one that the sculptor signed, with an autograph or through a proxy, what he, and no one else, made).<sup>92</sup> There is, in short, a randomness that rivals the inscrutable, erratic practices seen in other genres. There is no obvious reason why the Phrasikleia korē [Figs. 55, 56] should have been signed but not, so far as we know, the Anavyssos kouros [Fig. 2]. There is no obvious reason why Khairedemos’ funerary statue [Fig. 72], made by Phaidimos, should have been signed but not the Acropolis’ Moschophoros (which just might also be a work of Phaidimos and whose one-line dedication was evidently cut by the same hand that twice inscribed Phaidimos’ signature elsewhere).<sup>93</sup> Richly inscribed works like the Mantiklos Apollo and the Nikandre korē suggest that the mere presence of lengthy texts of other kinds did not necessarily attract the writing of signatures. And it is just dumb luck that we happen to have a number of signatures by Praxiteles [Figs. 53, 54] and Lysippos [Fig. 57] but none at all by Polykleitos the Elder, Agorakritos (who is said to have hung signs with his own name on works of Phaidias), or Euphranor.

2. *Signing had regional and chronological dimensions.*<sup>94</sup> Whether the sculptor signed or not had something to do with where he was from, where he worked, what he worked on, and when he worked. For one thing, Athenians in general just seem to have liked writing more than other Greeks – a graphomania also seen on their vases. For another, they signed some things others did not: in Archaic Greece signatures on funerary monuments occur, with a few exceptions, exclusively in Attica.<sup>95</sup> Archaic Athenian sculptors also sign dedications, of course, but outside of Attica, almost all Archaic signatures appear on votives. East Greek sculptors tend to sign directly upon the bodies or garments of their statues [Fig. 59]; Athenians never do. Grave stelai are often signed in the 6th century [Figs. 63, 65], but not at all in the 4th, despite the large number of epitaphs and inscriptions identifying the depicted figures (perhaps sensitivities



had changed, and it was no longer considered appropriate to inject the name of the sculptor between the mourner and the dead).<sup>96</sup> Yet in the 4th century, far more Athenians (or, at least, sculptors who worked in Athens) sign their works than sculptors from any other place – 19 Athenians as opposed to four Rhodians, two Peloponnesians, one Parian, and so on.<sup>97</sup> So, as in other genres (such as potting and vase-painting, where the bulk of signatures are Archaic and Athenian), practices sometimes changed from one period to another, and varied from place to place.

So, too, signatures may have become more common later in the history of Greek sculpture than they were earlier. There appears to be a rough correlation between the proliferation of private portrait statues in the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods (on Delos, for example, or in the Agora, or on the Acropolis) and the number of extant signatures.<sup>98</sup> The impulse to sign seems especially powerful in the Hellenistic period, even in a number of genres besides sculpture.<sup>99</sup> It is probably not coincidental that signed mosaics, as we have seen, do not appear before the late 4th century [Fig. 27], and that the impulse to sign is now detectable even in mass-produced “minor” arts. The terracotta lamps that Archaic and Classical Greeks used to light their way, and the terracotta figurines they dedicated, are in every case unsigned. The earliest signatures of Greek lamp-makers (such as Apollonides, Asklepiades, and Dionysios of Athens) and coroplasts (such as Agestratos, Hyperbolos, and Diphilos of Myrina or Menekrates of Priene) do not appear until the 2nd century BCE.<sup>100</sup>

3. *Most extant sculptor signatures are proxies, not autographs.* In the Archaic period, some sculptors signed at least some of their own work: this is undoubtedly true for Euthykartides, [. . .]otos, [Poly]medes of Argos, Terpsikles of Miletos, Eudemos, and Geneleos of Samos – all datable around or earlier than 550 BCE – and it is probably true for such sculptors as Endoios, Philergos, Pythis, and Aristokles later on (that their signatures can on occasion differ in style from associated epitaphs or dedications is the strongest clue) [cf. Fig. 69]. But by the end of the 6th century – and then long afterward – most dedications, epitaphs, and signatures were inscribed by anonymous professional letterers who either were in the employ of the sculptors themselves (members of their ateliers, perhaps) or were freelancers hired by the client or patron.<sup>101</sup> In other words, the majority of what we are used to calling “sculptor signatures” are statements of authorship carved by someone other than the sculptor himself: they are proxies. One mason is thought to have inscribed signatures for at least three different Archaic sculptors (Phaidimos, Aristion, and Aristokles), for example, and there are sculptors (Phaidimos, Aristion) known to have used at least two different letterers. So, too, the mason who inscribed the base of Acropolis Korē 681 with the dedication of Nearkhos and the signature of Antenor [Pl. X] evidently also inscribed the signature of Euthykles on a

columnar base from the Acropolis, as well as public decrees, and so cannot have been Antenor himself.<sup>102</sup> But if, from the late Archaic period onward, inscription was normally regarded as the province of the professional scribe, autographs are occasionally still found even in the Classical period: Euenor's signature on the base of Angelitos's Athena [Pl. XIII, Fig. 70], written in a different hand from the dedication, and the (lost) signature of Pheidias "below the feet" of the Zeus at Olympia (430s BCE) are, again, likely examples.

4. *The decision to sign was usually not the sculptor's to make.* An inscribed monument, as we have seen, typically names the dedicant (normally the person responsible for commissioning it), the god who is honored or the mortal who is commemorated by it, and, on occasion, the sculptor who executed it. In the hierarchy of dedicant, subject, and artist, the dedicant in almost every case occupies the highest, the artist the lowest, rung, which is why the dedicant's name typically begins an inscribed text and the sculptor's signature typically ends it.<sup>103</sup> Even at the very start, on the base of Euthykartides' kouros [Fig. 1], ANETHEKE ("dedicated") comes before POIESAS ("having made"), indicating that Euthykartides himself considered his dedication of the statue more important than his carving of it. Dedication, after all, was the sacred act.

For the most part, then, the dedicator of a votive or funerary monument – the client, the one who hired the builder and sculptor and letterer (when they were different) – controlled not only the nature of the monument itself but also the content of whatever was written upon it. The form of the base, the kind of statue or relief that stood atop it, the presence or absence of a signature (as well as its size and location), were, in the end, up to him. The evidence suggests that in the history of Greek sculpture a strong majority of dedicants declined to solicit or approve the inscription of a signature. But some apparently believed that even a centimeter-high signature would add prestige to the monument, to their benefit. That is, a signature inscribed by a professional letterer rather than by the sculptor himself may not so much express the artist's pride in his own work or his own ego as the client's discernment and pride in having had the artist work for him.<sup>104</sup> At all events, while some sculptors undoubtedly had more influence over the form of a monument than others – it is easy to imagine patrons consulting with Praxiteles or Lysippos, for example, rather than simply dictating to them, and any sculptor worth his salt would have had an interest in making sure his statue was properly installed – the major decisions (including whether to hire a letterer to engrave the sculptor's signature, and whom to hire) must ultimately have been made by the one who paid the bills.

5. *Font size is not an infallible guide to artistic status.* Most Archaic and High Classical signatures are written on the same scale (or virtually so) as the associated dedication, epigram, or epitaph [cf. Figs. 72, 74, 82]. In the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods, however, sculptor signatures are typically small, even minuscule, compared to the texts they accompany. And so the question is, did

the status of the Greek sculptor diminish over time in proportion to the size of his signature? Is there a correlation between the size of the lettering and the importance of the sculptor who is named in the signature? The answer is: probably not. Those who would claim that the small size of Paionios's signature at Olympia [Pl. XIV] or Praxiteles' on the Kleiokrateia base [Fig. 53] or Bryaxis' on his tripod base [Fig. 85] reflects those sculptors' marginal role in the installation of their monuments, or the low esteem in which they were generally held by their fellow Greeks, must still explain why the signatures are there at all: their very existence proves that the names of Paionios, Praxiteles, and Bryaxis were worth recording – and worth reading out loud (and presumably one did not read aloud little words more softly than big ones). The same logic would, in any case, lead to the conclusion that the relatively large size and centrality of signatures on many Archaic and Early Classical monuments [cf. Figs. 70, 73, 76, 79] reflect the prominence of the sculptor and his high status in the 6th and early 5th centuries (and that in turn would undercut the conventional wisdom that the Greek sculptor, like other disparaged artisans, was in every period a mere *banausos*). In a few cases, such as Philergos' inordinately large signature (probably an autograph) on the Leanax base [Fig. 77] or Euphron's on his Acropolis monument (probably a proxy),<sup>105</sup> font size would even suggest that the sculptor's name was *more* important than his subject's or his client's. This is a difficult conclusion to maintain, and so is any strong correlation between typography and status: it is unlikely that Philergos, in his day, was more important or esteemed than Praxiteles, in his.<sup>106</sup>



## PART THREE

## SPECULATIONS





## CHAPTER ELEVEN

## WHY?

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW WHY A GREEK ARTIST WHO DID NOT SIGN HIS work, did not. The best we can do is suggest why a Greek artist who did sign his work, did. And the reason that comes easiest and quickest to mind – the broadest reason – is that he was human. That is, we assume that the impulse to sign and so take credit for one’s work is, and has always been, deeply seated in the human psyche. We have egos. People (creative or otherwise) want other people to know and acknowledge what good works they have done. The artist instinctively wants people to know that he painted this or sculpted that as a matter of record and as a matter of pride, whether that pride is deserved (as in the case of, say, Exekias [Pl. VIII and Fig. 40]) or not (as in the case of Khares [Fig. 35] or Oikopheles [Fig. 49]). The signature is, then, an instrument of *kleos*, and there were even ancient commentators who believed that artists and architects (and poets and philosophers) found in such fame recompense for death.<sup>1</sup>

The standard formulae “So-and-so made me” and “So-and-so painted me” are simple records of agency: *Parmenon made me* (inscribed on that wall on Thasos, Fig. 26) or *Exekias made and painted me* (painted around the mouths of his Vatican and Berlin amphoras, Figs. 40, 41) or *Polygnotos painted the sacking of Iliion’s akropolis* (on the wall of the Knidian Lesche) provide basic information. Occasionally, there are statements that go further, explicitly claiming pride in technique or skill or even originality.<sup>2</sup> There is, for example, that Boiotian cup with *Epikhe made me for the gods – beautiful gifts [he makes]!* written inside



87. Nike dedicated on Delos, c. 550 BCE, signed by Arkhermos of Chios. Athens, National Museum 21. Photo: author.

of it. There is *Exekias made me well*, written on that Black Figure lip cup in the Louvre (even if Exekias himself did not write it).<sup>3</sup> And there is a foot of a fragmentary late 6th-century Red Figure vase from the Acropolis inscribed with an epigram calling it a *KALON AGALMA* (*beautiful delight* or *beautiful gift*) and praising its potters (who were also its dedicators – names not preserved) for their *sophiai*, which in this and other contexts must mean “technical skills,” “know-how,” or “excellence in craft.”<sup>4</sup> So, too, a number of sculptors’ signatures from the 6th and early 5th centuries emphasize their talents. An early 6th-century capital from Halai, for example, is inscribed with an epigram through which the (lost) egocentric – and egotistical – statue standing above spoke:

*Euandros dedicated me, making my very beautiful figure  
with his own hands, and gave me to Athena, protector of the city.*<sup>5</sup>

On a base usually thought to have supported a winged Nike dedicated on Delos around 550 BCE, the sculptor Arkhermos of Chios compliments himself on his own *sophiai* [Figs. 87, 88].<sup>6</sup> The badly damaged (hence, hard to restore) inscription reads something like:



88. Inscribed base of Nike of Arkhermos. Athens, National Museum 21a. Photo: author.

*Farshooter Apollo, accept this beautiful statue [agalma],  
made with the skills (sophieisin) of Arkhermos,  
from Mikkiades, the Chian, . . . the paternal city of Melas.*

Clearly, Arkhermos did not doubt his own sculptural abilities and through the signature promoted them. Just as self-assured were his sons Boupalos and Athenis, who, according to Pliny, made a number of statues of gods on Delos and on other islands and inscribed their bases with epigrams stating that “Chios was not only honored for her vines but also for the works of the sons of Arkhermos” – that is, their native Chios was lucky to have them.<sup>7</sup> Nor was self-esteem an issue for the roughly contemporary Athenian sculptor who at some point in his career appears to have taken the name Phaidimos (*Brilliant*), who on one signed stele calls himself *sophos* (clever, skilled, wise in his craft) – in fact, the name and the adjective are written as one word, PHAIDIMOSOPHOS – and whose signed Phile kore [Fig. 73] declares itself to be KALON IDEN (*beautiful to behold*).<sup>8</sup> It was with considerable pride in a single foreshortened foot that Alxenor of Naxos put his name to that Boiotian grave stele and added a breathless, Homeric command telling the viewer to “simply behold” what he had wrought [Figs. 65, 66]. In the early 5th century, Onatas called himself *sophos* in the signature Pausanias saw engraved on Idomeneus’ shield in the bronze Akhaian Monument at Olympia.<sup>9</sup> In the middle of the 5th century a bronzeworker named Dikon both made and dedicated a bronze strigil at Olympia, and the epigram inscribed on its surface not only mentions his *sophia* but also implies that as an artisan he was superior to the average dedicator because he did not have to offer something made by someone else:

*This Dikon dedicated as a gift to Zeus from[ . . . ]  
after making it himself: for this is the skill [sophian] that he has.<sup>10</sup>*

And signatures claiming not just agency, but also supreme talent, were made by painters, too: the arrogant Parrhasios, as we have seen, boasted in his verse signatures that he had reached the limits of art and would not be surpassed. Zeuxis, in his signatures, evidently disagreed.

So, some Greek artists and artisans explicitly took pride in their work and boasted of their skill. That is not surprising. But as an explanation for the full phenomenon of signing in Greek art, the simple human desire to record and claim credit for the production of a work of art – what has been called the “conviction of the uniqueness of artistic creation”<sup>11</sup> – is clearly insufficient. If human nature were enough, a majority of Greek gems, mosaics, vases, and sculptures would be signed, not a small minority. To sign may be human, but it is still hard to divine: as we have repeatedly seen, no Greek artist signs all of the time, and most Greek artists do not sign at all, and so were quite capable of resisting a supposedly universal and innate human impulse. (And ancient artists, incidentally, are not alone: no Byzantine painter ever signed an icon; Giotto signed only three times, and briefly; Raphael signed only 18 of the roughly one hundred paintings attributed to him; Leonardo signed nothing at all; and neither did Michelangelo, with the exception of the *Pietà* in St. Peter’s – and that, if a dubious story told by Giorgio Vasari is to be believed, only under unusual circumstances).<sup>12</sup> There may be other preconditions, besides human nature, necessary for signing to occur and then to thrive: widespread literacy, obviously, but perhaps also a heightened sense of one’s own individuality, which might not be sensed in cultures (like Egypt’s or Sumer’s) where individuality is suppressed, where artists are constrained by strict canons and formulae that fix the nature of production and discourage difference, and where autocrats claim credit for artistic and architectural programs really executed by agents unknown to us. Individuality would have been more strongly felt in *polis*-societies like Athens.<sup>13</sup> Still, that does not explain why most artists even in democratic Athens did not sign, or why the same individual signed some works but not others (was Exekias less proud of his unsigned amphora in Boulogne-sur-mer [Fig. 42] than of his signed amphora in the Vatican [Fig. 40]?).

There must have been an economic or mercantile dimension to some signatures: the Greek potter or sculptor, after all, was in the *business* of artistic production, operating in a market with other potters and sculptors, and so in some cases a signature has the character of an advertisement, brand, or trademark.<sup>14</sup> This is almost certainly true of NIKOSTHENES EPOIESEN, which appears on so many Attic vases exported to Etruria [Fig. 44] and which is, as we have noted, by far the most common signature in the entire history of Greek art: commerce and signing here go hand in hand.<sup>15</sup> Nikosthenes, owner of a bustling, prolific workshop, was clearly an entrepreneur, and so were a number of sculptors, especially Late Classical and Hellenistic ones, ranging from the great Lysippos, who is said to have cast fifteen hundred bronze statues

(“more than any other artist,” Pliny says), to the less great but still much-in-demand Hephaistion and his son Eutykhides, who churned out dozens of signed portraits on Delos in the late 2nd century [Fig. 61].<sup>16</sup> Signatures (autographs or proxies) always benefited the artists named in them: they became better known with each signature and so they inevitably profited from the publicity. And the right name certainly added value to the work of art: that is the point of the story about Apelles’ apparent willingness to put his name on Protogenes’ paintings to increase their price. Conversely, the right work could make a reputation, which is the point of the story that Pheidias allowed some of his own statues to go under the name of his beloved Agorakritos.<sup>17</sup>

But here again entrepreneurship seems insufficient to explain the phenomenon of signing in general. On the vases of one of the most commercially successful of all Greek ceramic centers, Archaic Corinth, there are, as we have seen, hardly any signatures at all [cf. Fig. 35]. Again, many of the finest Attic vase-painters do not sign. And if a signature on a statue was naturally intended to attract future commissions (as signatures as early as Euthykartides’ must have been, Pl. I, Fig. 1), then apparently unsigned works like the Anavyssos kouros [Fig. 2] could not have directed much business their sculptors’ way. In the end, if the profit motive were the single most important rationale behind signing vases or statues, if the signature was a form of advertisement and had clear economic value in and of itself, we would, once again, expect to have far more of them than we do.<sup>18</sup> Nikosthenes aside, there appears to be only a weak or uneven correlation between signing and commerce.

We are not told very much about the patrons of free painters: Polygnotos, Mikon, and Panainos ostensibly worked for the city of Athens in the Stoa Poikile (though Peisianax, probably Kimon’s brother-in-law, built or financed it), Polygnotos was employed by the city of Knidos at Delphi, and Apelles enjoyed the patronage of Alexander the Great. But we get the picture that, most of time, Parrhasios and Zeuxis and Nikias and even Apelles were independent agents, painting what they liked, signing what they liked, without contracts or patrons. The paintings Zeuxis supposedly gave away because they were priceless are not likely to have been commissions; Nikias, since he had made a fortune already, gave his painting of *The Nekyia* (or *Nekyomanteia*) to the city of Athens rather than sell it to Ptolemy I for 60 talents, thus earning a state burial in the public cemetery and an epitaph calling him the best of painters; and Apelles is said to have habitually displayed his works on his balcony – in an open-air gallery, as it were – so he could surreptitiously listen to the public’s comments about them.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, many sculptors’ signatures were, as we have seen, probably signed not at the initiative of the artist but at the behest of the client who commissioned the work and hired the mason to inscribe it. That is, the signature typically bestowed at least as much prestige upon the patron who employed the artist as upon the artist himself. That could be

why (in one possible narrative) Opsios asked the established Endoios to add his more prestigious name to the base of a kore already signed by Philergos [Fig. 68]. That must be why Mika wore a gem inscribed not only with her own name, but also with the name of the gem-cutter, Dexamenos: the names of owner and artist comfortably shared the small field [Pl. V]. That must be why Syracuse was proud to have artists like Eukleidas, Euainetos, Eumenos, and Kimon sign its dies [Pl. VI, Figs. 17, 18, 19]. Their talent for carving on a tiny scale reflected well upon the great city that employed them, and so their names could share the same field as SYRAKOSIŌN, too. The Athenian *demos* may have belatedly set up a stele inside the Parthenon crediting Pheidias for the Athena Parthenos because his name added even more prestige to their statue – and to Athens – after the impact of Pheidias’ wondrous statue of Zeus at Olympia. And Arkhippe must have been proud and delighted to have been able to commission the famous Praxiteles to make the portrait of her daughter and have it prominently signed below the dedication [Fig. 54]. Certainly, at some times, artists competed for commissions and patrons; at other times, patrons with commissions competed for artists. But the problem still remains: if the primary beneficiary of the prestige conferred upon a work of art by a signature was the client, why were most clients – Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic – content with unsigned works?

Whatever the answers to questions like that – and we must concede that there may not be any – the Greek artist’s signature needs to be situated in a broader cultural context. Signing is something that Greek poets and historians do, too. Almost as early as Greek poetry begins, in 14 lines near the beginning of the *Theogony*, Hesiod (c. 700 BCE) names himself as the poet of the epic, telling how once on Mt. Helikon the Muses appeared to him and taught him beautiful song, gave him a laurel staff, breathed divine voice into him, and told him to sing of the race of the blessed gods.<sup>20</sup> He does not expressly name himself in his other epic, the *Works and Days*, but he names his brother, Perses, and offers plenty of personal information besides, including the report that once, in funeral games held at Khalkis, he won a victory in a poetry competition and dedicated his prize tripod to the Muses on Mt. Helikon, where he had run into them before.<sup>21</sup> After Hesiod, there is much lyric and elegiac poetry, mostly very fragmentary. Much of it is (or pretends to be) individual and personal and it is not anonymous: names such as Arkhilochos, Sappho, Alkaios, Tyrtaios, and Mimnermos are attached to the poetic sherds. And although it is difficult to date the Archaic elegist Theognis precisely, near the beginning of the lines that go under his name there is his *sphragis*, his seal, his signature: “every one shall say, ‘these are the words of Theognis of Megara, famed among all men.’”<sup>22</sup> In the realm of prose HĒRODOTOU (*Herodotos*, in the genitive) is the first word of his history of the Persian Wars.



THOUKYDIDĒS (*Thucydides*, in the nominative) is the first word of his history of the Peloponnesian War. These are *sphragēis*, too. And the book rolls inscribed with the tragedies and comedies that were entered into competition at the dramatic festivals of Athens must have carried tags (*sillyboi*) with their authors' names – otherwise the judges would not have known whose works they were and whom to schedule on stage. Signatures were required in such competitions.

The impulse to sign the work of art (literary or visual), then, may often have been generated by something endemically Greek: the *agōn* ("labor," but also "contest," "competition"). The signature identifies an author or maker and distinguishes him from other authors and makers, at the same time that it establishes him as a competitor with others in contests both formal and informal. And there is little doubt that it was in an agonistic spirit, with a determination to outdo their rivals or claim a kind of superiority over them (implicitly or explicitly), that many Greek artists signed their works. Disparagement by the likes of Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle would not have bothered them, for the signatures they wrote document the esteem in which they held themselves. Sculptors like Phaidimos, Antenor, Pheidias, Polykleitos, Paionios, Praxiteles, and Lysippos, and painters like Polygnotos, Parrhasios, Zeuxis, and Apelles, and Syracusan die-engravers like Euainetos and Kimon, and gem-cutters like Dexamenos and Pyrgoteles, and Attic vase-painters like Exekias or Euthymides – these were not the sort of artists to consider their work marginal or themselves mere *banausoi*. A marginal artist does not, like Apelles, author (and presumably sign) at least two treatises expounding upon his own theory of art or, like Polykleitos, write (and presumably sign) a book on how to make the ideal statue, and then make one to illustrate its principles – a *Kanon* in bronze that immediately influenced Athenian sculptors then carving the Parthenon frieze, and many later works.<sup>23</sup> A marginal artist does not, like Praxiteles, shatter a centuries-old taboo with a nude Aphrodite that changed the way the female form could be displayed for the rest of antiquity or, like Lysippos, produce hundreds of bronze statues in a career and, furthermore, implicitly claim that his work was a response to and a critique of Polykleitos' *Kanon*: the 4th-century sculptor considered himself to be in competition with a statue, the *Doryphoros*, cast a century before.<sup>24</sup> A similar kind of response must have occurred more than a century earlier, in 477/476 BCE, when Kritios and Nesiotes replaced Antenor's *Tyrannicides* (taken by the Persians just three years earlier) with their own: whether the new statues were intended to reproduce the old ones as closely as possible or instead offered a radically new conception of the democratic heroes, the Early Classical sculptors inevitably engaged the Archaic sculptor as rivals – first in Athenian memory (so long as Antenor's statues were missing) and then directly, after the originals were returned

in the late 4th century and the two monuments stood side by side in the Agora.<sup>25</sup>

At some point – and it was probably earlier rather than later – the Greeks, unlike any other people of antiquity, conceived of their own history of art as a history of artists engaging with, reacting against, and improving upon the works of other artists,<sup>26</sup> which is why the “construction” of the Greek artist began not with us or with Renaissance commentators or even with Pliny, but with the Greeks themselves: Greek Vasaris began to write biographies of painters and sculptors at least as early as Douris of Samos (c. 340–260 BCE).<sup>27</sup> And it is why so many anecdotes told by Pliny and others – apocryphal or not – record contests between sculptors or painters who were keenly aware of their own contributions to their arts. These tales reveal the Greek obsession with competition, and it was this agonistic spirit among artisans (noted, again, as early as Hesiod, whose “potter vies with potter and craftsman with craftsman”)<sup>28</sup> that must have been a major engine of artistic change, stylistic evolution, and originality throughout the history of Greek art. Art was *agōn*.

We usually associate such *agones* with the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Painting competitions are said to have begun at Corinth and Delphi around the middle of the 5th century, when Timagoras of Khalkis defeated Panainos at the Pythian Games and commemorated his victory with an epigram (presumably a signature in verse written upon the prize painting).<sup>29</sup> Not much later, Polykleitos supposedly defeated Pheidias, Kresilas, Kydon (an error for Kresilas of Kydonia), and Phradmon in a sculptural competition, judged by the artists themselves, to make a Wounded Amazon for the Temple of Artemis at Ephesos.<sup>30</sup> And not much later than that Alkamenes defeated Agorakritos in an Aphrodite contest (Agorakritos, loser by popular vote, renamed his statue Nemesis in a huff and sold it to the deme of Rhamnous).<sup>31</sup> At some point a formal competition between Zeuxis and Parrhasios ended in a clear victory for Parrhasios (Zeuxis was forced to concede that Parrhasios’ *trompe l’oeil* painting of a linen curtain fooled him, a painter, while his own painting of grapes fooled only birds). But on Samos, in a contest of paintings showing Ajax and the awarding of Achilles’ armor, Parrhasios himself was decisively defeated by Timanthes (the contest was evidently put to another public vote, and Timanthes won in a landslide).<sup>32</sup> Timanthes won again, somewhere, in a competition with Kolotes of Teos.<sup>33</sup> In other fields, it is possible that the appearance of engravers’ signatures on Syracusan coinage was generated by ateliers formally competing for contracts at the turbulent end of the 5th century: Dionysios I, as we have noted, might have held formal competitions and encouraged engravers to sign.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, one possible explanation for Apollo[nios?]'s signature on the visually inaccessible Chariot frieze of the Mausoleion is, as we

have seen, that its sculptors competed with one another in its production – that they stood to gain from the skill they brought to the task, so long as their work could be identified. And on Hellenistic Delos there is the remarkable case of two bronze portrait statues of the same man, the official Epigenes, set up in the same year (127/126 BCE) side by side at the north end of the Stoa of Philip: the statues were apparently the same size and were posed in much the same way, but one was dedicated by merchants and ship owners and was made by the team of Boethos and Theodosios, while the other was dedicated by Athenian and Roman residents of the island and was made by Hephaistion, son of Myron, an Athenian [Fig. 61].<sup>35</sup> There was, perhaps, no formal competition between the two teams of dedicants and sculptors: the real winner, in any case, was Epigenes, their subject, honored (as the inscriptions tell us) for his virtue (*aretē*) and justice (*dikaiosynē*). But the *agōn* between the two monuments, competitors for his favor, must have been clear, and signed statues in other sanctuaries and in other contexts must inevitably have been considered rivals for the attention and admiration of the viewer. The Greek sanctuary was, in essence, a field of competition between works of art dedicated to the gods.

Again, we do not have to believe all the stories Pliny and our other sources relate about Classical and Hellenistic sculpture and painting contests, but they still tell us something fundamental about the Greek artist in general: whether he was a potter or vase-painter working in a shop near other workshops – someone like the Athenian potter Bakkhios, who, according to his epitaph, won every contest he entered for the contract to make Panathenaic amphorae<sup>36</sup> – or a sculptor vying for commissions with other sculptors or a free painter setting his talents against others', he was obsessed with outdoing his rivals through technique and conception, with making things better and thus new.<sup>37</sup> The *agōn* was fundamental to Greek culture and society in almost every sphere, at almost every level (the 33 Athenian tragedies that survive in full are the relics of annual dramatic competitions held in the theater on the south slope of the Acropolis, and so the *agōn* waged in the Underworld between Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs* would have struck the Athenian audience as funny but not ridiculous – in the Upperworld playwright Hesiodically vied with playwright all the time). An agonistic temperament, in short, underlay the Greek "cultural imagination,"<sup>38</sup> and the signature (occasional though it is) is the graphic marker of a competitive self-consciousness that refused anonymity and propelled artistic change. But the desire to claim or demonstrate superior *tekhne* or *sophia* or inventiveness was not just Classical or Hellenistic. An agonistic spirit generating technical advances and stylistic originality can be traced at least as far back as Euthymides' late Archaic taunt of Euphronios – in effect, *I, Euthymides, painted this as you, Euphronios, never could*

[Fig. 46]. And it is implicit even earlier than that, in, say, the stylistic history of Archaic statuary (which has a history in the first place because individual sculptors vied with sculptors), and specifically in the 7th-century signature of Euthykartides, who by boldly writing his name beneath his very early kouros, in that very first sculptor's signature [Pl. I, Fig. 1], was really issuing a challenge to all.

## GLOSSARY

*agalma* (ἄγαλμα): delight, pleasing gift, statue.

*agōn* (ἄγών; pl. *agones*): labor, struggle, contest, competition for a prize.

*amphora*: a two-handled jar, tall, with a neck narrower than the body, typically used to store, transport, and decant liquids such as wine or oil; it could also hold dry commodities.

*anetheke*: “(So-and-so) dedicated,” from *anathēmi* (ἀνατίθημι, “dedicate,” “set up as a votive”). *Anathēma* is the normal word for “votive” or “dedication.”

*aryballos*: a small, narrow-necked bottle for perfumed oil or unguents.

*banausos* (βάναισος): “menial laborer,” “craftsman,” “artisan”; when used as an adjective, “vulgar,” “lowly,” or “base,” which tells us something about what the Greeks (or, at least, some Greeks) thought of artisans.

*boustrophēdon* (βουστροφηδόν): literally, “ox-turning,” that is, “turning like oxen plough the field.” Applied to inscriptions where a line written in one direction (and at first that is typically right to left, with letters facing left) is followed continuously by another line written in the opposite direction (left to right, with the letters turned round, too), then by another in the first direction (right to left), and so on, back and forth, saving the eye the trouble of always having to break away from the text at the end of one line and returning to where it started to find the beginning of the next. The Greeks were especially adept at writing in both directions early in their literate history (they learned to write from the Phoenicians, who wrote right to left). But *boustrophēdon* – sinuous, fluid, and economical – goes out of style (for the most part) in the 6th century, and writing left to right becomes the norm.

*dekadrachm*: a large coin, usually silver or gold, that weighs 10 drachmas (about 43 grams), or that is worth 10 drachmas.

*die-engraving*: the art of engraving a bronze or iron tool or matrix (the die proper) with a negative design or image to be stamped on a coin. A heated and so malleable blank (or flan) of gold, silver, or bronze is placed over an engraved die set into an anvil (this is the “obverse” die). The blank is then struck from above by a punch, with its own engraved design (the “reverse” die), driven by a hammer. The result is a coin with low reliefs on both sides. Coins were obviously mass-produced, and it is estimated that a typical die could be struck between 10,000 and 20,000 times before wearing out or suffering damage.

*dinos*: a large, rounded, handleless bowl, usually set atop a matching stand.

*egocentric*: used (neutrally) here of works of art that, through first-person inscriptions such as “Kore shall I be called forever” [Fig. 55] or “Kleitias painted me” [Fig. 39], seem conscious, aware of their own existence.

*egraphse* or *egrapse*: “(So-and-so) painted,” from the verb *graphō* (γράφω), “represent with lines,” “draw,” “paint,” also “write”. Relatively uncontroversial, unlike the verb with which it is often paired on vases: *epoiese*.

*emblemata* (pl. *emblemata*): a mosaic created independently on a tray or slab and then inserted into a larger mosaic floor.

*epigram*: a short inscription in verse, usually about a person, event, or thing; from ἐπίγραμμα (“inscription”).

*epoiese*: “[So-and-so] made,” from the verb *poieō* (ποιέω), “make,” “produce”; sometimes *epoiei* or *epoie* or, in the plural, *epoion* (so-called

imperfect verb forms literally meaning “was (or were) making,” suggesting continuous or incompleted past action). The uses and meanings of *epoiese* are varied, inconsistent and controversial. It usually means “made with his own hands.” In sculpture, it means that almost exclusively. In other genres (such as architecture), it can mean “designed” or “caused to be made (or built).” In ceramics, it can mean “made” in the sense of “potted,” “thrown,” “shaped on the wheel with his own hands,” or it can mean “made” in a more inclusive sense (both “potted” and “painted”). On occasion, it may, like a trademark or brand, refer to the owner of the workshop in which the vase was made; that is, “X *epoiese*” can sometimes mean “this vase came of the workshop of X,” whether or not X ever touched it or had anything directly to do with its actual production.

Occasionally other words or locutions are used for “made.” For example, EGLYPSEN – “carved [it]” – is cut into a few coins, and ERGASATO (from *ergazomai*, ἐργάζομαι, “work”) appears on at least one vase, two statue bases [cf. Fig. 73], and a mosaic [cf. Fig. 29]. EKERAMEUSEN (from *kerameuō*, κεραμεύω, “work with clay”) explicitly means “potted” (unlike the ambiguous *epoiese*), but the verb appears, remarkably, on exactly one vase [Fig. 49]. And one sculptor signs with the verbless phrase ERGON ARISTOKLEOS (*work of Aristokles*) [Fig. 64].

*hydria*: a large three-handled jar for fetching and holding water.

*kalos* (καλός)-*inscription*: An inscription on a vase or plaque (usually having nothing to do with the scene in which it appears) praising the good looks of a specific aristocratic boy or youth of the day: LEAGROS KALOS (*Leagros is handsome*) is by far the most popular, but some two hundred *kalos*-names are known. Though *kalos*-inscriptions are occasionally found elsewhere (Boiotia, for example), Athens is the real home of the conceit; its heyday is the half-century between 520 and 470 BCE. Occasionally, the praise is generic (HO PAIS KALOS, *the boy is beautiful*). More

rarely, a painted girl or woman can be similarly praised as KALĒ: such nameless beauties are probably slave-girls or courtesans.

*kantharos*: a deep drinking cup with vertical handles.

*Kerameikos*: a large area in northwest Athens extending about 1.5 kilometers from the Classical Agora to Plato’s Academy. Within this area, but outside the city wall, was ancient Athens’ great cemetery. Inside the wall lay residential areas and the principal industrial zone of Athens, including the Potter’s Quarter, the *Kerameikos* (or “ceramics place”) proper: the word may derive from Keramos, patron hero of potters. *Kerameikos* may, in practice, refer to the entire district, to the cemetery, or to the industrial quarter.

*kleos* (κλέος): “renown,” “repute,” “fame,” particularly the fame that is generated by speaking. Reading aloud was apparently the norm in ancient Greece, even in times of widespread literacy. So, when an inscription on a statue or vase or some other inanimate object refers (as it often does) to “me,” as if it were conscious or “egocentric” (see above), and the reader spoke the words out loud, he lent his voice to the inscribed object and the sounds bestowed *kleos* upon it, its dedicator, and (when a signature was included) its maker.

*kore* (κόρη, lit., “girl, maiden, virgin”; pl. *koraî*): A statue of a clothed young woman, standing upright, with feet set close together or with the left leg slightly advanced and her hands held in a variety of positions. The costumes of the *kore* can be simple or elaborate. One of the major forms of Archaic free-standing sculpture (c. 650–480 BCE), the *kore* functioned either as a grave-marker or dedication.

*kouros* (κούρος, lit., “youth”; pl. *kouroi*): A statue of a nude, beardless youth, standing upright with the left leg advanced, the right leg drawn back (and so distributing his weight evenly on both legs), with both hands held at his sides. One of the major forms of Archaic free-standing sculpture (its history begins c. 650 BCE and ends c. 480 BCE), the *kouros* was typically funerary or votive in function.



*krater*: a large, wide-mouthed, deep bowl for the mixing of wine with water, in a wide variety of shapes.

*kylix* (pl. *kylikes*): a shallow, stemmed two-handled drinking cup.

*oinochoe* (lit., “wine-pourer): a jug, coming in a wide range of sizes and shapes

*philotimia* (φιλοτιμία): love of honor, munificence for the public good, generosity.

*pinax* (pl. *pinakes*): a plaque, usually of terracotta or wood.

*pyxis*: a round, lidded, handleless container or “box” for cosmetics or jewelry.

*retrograde*: applied to a single word, phrase, or line written right to left. Most common in the Archaic period, but cases are known in the 5th century as well.

*sēma* (σῆμα): sign, tomb, grave-marker.

*signature, artist’s*: a text, usually inscribed or painted, that identifies the maker of the work of art on which it is displayed. The signature usually consists of a name and a verb (such as *epoiese* or *egrapse*; see above), although on the small surfaces of gems or coins a name alone, in the nominative case, may suffice. The text can be written directly on or within the work itself, so it is an integral part of the image, occupying the same space as a figure or scene (see *signature, integrated* below), or it can be written separately on another element in the ensemble of the work (for example, on a statue base), in which case signature and image exist in different realms, even though they may be seen more or less simultaneously.<sup>1</sup> Integrated or discrete, the signature is an assertion of agency or responsibility. And like other Archaic and Classical texts, including the inscribed dedications with which they are often paired, signatures were meant to be read out loud. The signature was thus a device that produced *kleos* (“renown,” “spoken fame”; see above) as it was voiced, *because* it was voiced. The signature can be written by the hand of the artist himself (in which case it is an autograph) or it can be written at the time of manufacture by someone else – a colleague, an assistant, or a professional letterer hired specifically for the job (in which case it is what we here call a “proxy

signature”). Both kinds of signature should be distinguished from identifying labels, which could be written and appended to a work long after production.

*signature, integrated*: an artist’s signature that is written directly upon an object (such as a statue, cf. Figs. 58, 59) or that is written on or within an image or scene (such as on a gem, mosaic, or vase-painting, cf. Pl. V and Figs. 27 and 39). Unlike signatures written on a separate base [cf. Fig. 70], or along the frame of a relief [cf. Fig. 50] or on the foot of a cup, or on the rim of an amphora [Fig. 41], integrated signatures are part of the figure or image, and as such they assert the object’s existence *as* an object, and the surface’s existence *as* a surface: a real person does not have letters engraved into him or her, and in the real world words do not float in the air around the figures who occupy it. Integrated signatures thus inherently subvert any sense of three-dimensional or pictorial space that a figure or scene might otherwise depict or imply: the inscribed area around painted figures is not read as “sky” or “atmosphere,” but just “area” [cf. Pl. VIII]. Often, integrated signatures (and other texts) are skillfully deployed to enhance the formal properties of the image – a signature written vertically emphasizing the axis of a pot or the symmetry of a scene, for example [Fig. 44], or a curving signature emphasizing the roundness of the field or the circularity of motion (cf. Fig. 48).

*sillybos* (σίλλυβος): a tag or label of parchment attached to a book-scroll.

*skyphos*: a deep two-handled cup.

*sophia* (σοφία): skill, cunning, excellence in craft, practical intelligence; wisdom; *sophos* is the adjective (cunning, skillful, technically proficient, wise).

*stele* (στῆλη): an upright slab of stone, inscribed with texts and/or decorated with figures in relief or paint.

*stoikhēdon* (στοιχηδόν): literally, “set in a row,” like soldiers in formation. The word is used to describe a text in which the letters are aligned both vertically and horizontally, with equal spacing, as if laid out on a grid. In its purest form, there is the same number of letters in

each line, and the letters in one line lie exactly below the corresponding letters in the line above. Primarily (but not exclusively) an Attic inscriptional style that is most popular from the late 6th century BCE to the beginning of the 3rd.

*symmetria* (συμμετρία): the harmonious relationship of part to part and of the parts to the whole; commensurability.

*tekhnē* (τέχνη): “craft, skill, technique, rational production.” The Greeks, famously, had no word for what we call “fine art” and did not distinguish art from craft (or artist from artisan). In this book, neither do we.

*temenos* (τέμενος): land that has been “cut off” from common use; a sacred precinct.

*tetradrachm*: a coin that weighs or is worth four drachmas (c. 17 grams).

## APPENDIX

ANCIENT LITERARY SOURCES ON GREEK  
AND ROMAN ART

**Aelian** (c. 170–235 CE). A freedman born at Praeneste in central Italy, the author of works (in Greek) on rhetoric, morality, the rustic life of Classical Athens, the animal kingdom, justice, and divine providence.

**Athenaios** (c. 200 CE). From Naukratis in Egypt, a learned antiquarian and author of the *Deipnosophistai* (*Learned Banqueters*), in which symposiasts declaim on many different topics, commonly quoting drinking songs and poetry and often commenting upon art.

**Diodoros Siculus** (fl. c. 60–30 BCE). Sicilian-born Greek author of an originally 40-book-long history of the world (the *Bibliothēke*, or *Library*) beginning with mythological times and Egypt and concluding with the Gallic Wars fought by Julius Caesar (58–50 BCE).

**Greek (or Palatine) Anthology.** A vast collection of epigrams, dedications, epitaphs, erotic poems, riddles, and descriptions of works of art (*ekphraseis*) by various poets ranging from the Hellenistic to Byzantine periods (that is, over the course of a millennium and a half).

**Herodotos** (c. 480–420 BCE). Born in Halikarnassos and a wide-ranging traveler and lecturer, H. wrote a history of the Persian Wars (*Historiē*) whose vast scope occasionally includes works of ancient art and architecture (the pyramids of Egypt, for example).

**Lucian** (c. 120–200 CE). Born at Samosata (in Mesopotamia) and late in life a bureaucrat in Roman Egypt, L. was the author of essays on rhetoric and, above all, numerous witty and satirical dialogues on a variety of literary, philosophical, and artistic subjects (for example, the Aphrodite of Knidos).

**Pausanias** (flourished c. 150–161 CE). Author of the detailed 10-book-long guide *A Description of Greece* (*Periēgēsis tēs Hellados*), which is essential to our understanding of the artistic landscape of ancient Greek cities and sanctuaries during the Roman Imperial period. The information he provides – he focuses on Archaic and Classical Greek sculpture and painting – is usually, though not always, reliable.

**Pliny the Elder** (23–79 CE). A Roman commander, admiral, historian, and polymath who wrote, among other things, the 37-book-long, encyclopedic *Natural History* (*Naturalis Historia*), which he dedicated to the emperor Titus in 77. Books 34, 35, and 36 in particular are concerned with bronze sculpture, painting, and terracotta and marble sculpture, and the (mostly Greek) artists who produced them. He died (of curiosity and asphyxiation) during the catastrophic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in August 79 CE.

**Plutarch** (c. 45–125 CE). From Chaironeia in Boeotia, a philosopher and for the last 30 years of his life a priest at Delphi, P. wrote didactic essays and dialogues but is most famous for a thick biographical work, full of entertaining and moralizing anecdotes, popularly known as the *Parallel Lives of Greeks and Romans*, comparing Romans like Romulus, Fabius, and Coriolanus to Greeks like Theseus, Perikles, and Alkibiades.

**Quintilian** (c. 35–100 CE). A Roman rhetorician and teacher, author of such works as the *Institutio Oratoria*, concerning the training and education of an orator from childhood to maturity.

**Statius** (c. 45–96 CE). Born in Naples, a Roman poet who flourished during the reign of the Emperor Domitian. The author of mythological works, such as the *Thebaid*, his *Silvae* consists of occasional poems addressed to friends on a variety of topics, including the acquisition of works of art.

**Strabo** (c. 64 BCE–21 CE). An Augustan-era Greek historian and geographer who wrote the 17-book-long *Geography* (*Geōgraphia*) essentially describing the known world from Britain and Spain to Egypt (where he had a long stay), Ethiopia, and India. Despite the volume's coverage, S. himself, probably based in Rome, apparently did not travel everywhere he describes, and his personal knowledge of Greece and even Italy seems limited. His monumental book relies heavily on a body of (lost) works by earlier authors.

**Thucydides** (c. 460–400 BCE). Athenian general and historian of the Peloponnesian War fought between Athens and Sparta and their allies between 431 and 404. Exiled from Athens in 424, he never completed his monumental *History*.

**Varro, Marcus Terentius** (116–27 BCE). Prolific Roman author of works on language, philosophy, science, architecture, music, biography, and other scholarly topics.

**Vitruvius** (late 1st century BCE–early 1st century CE). Roman architect in the age of Augustus and author of *De Architectura*, a 10-book-long volume on Greek and Roman architecture and engineering (the only one of its kind to survive antiquity).

**Xenophon** (c. 428–354 BCE). Athenian soldier, historian, philosopher (he was a member of the circle of Socrates), and prolific author. His *Hellenika* picks up the story of the Peloponnesian War from where Thucydides leaves off; the *Anabasis* relates how Xenophon himself led and saved an army of Greek mercenaries making their escape from Persia; the *Memorabilia* is a compendium of conversations between Socrates and others on matters both practical and philosophical; and his *Oikonomikos* consists of two dialogues on morality, agriculture, and the management of country estates (Socrates is again the major conversant).

## NOTES

### CHAPTER 1

1. Delos A 728. Kokkourou-Alewrass 1995, 83–84 (no. 12), [figs. 24–27](#). Terms found in the Glossary, like *kouros* and *temenos*, are *italicized* and marked with an asterisk (\*) the first time they appear in the text.
2. More of the right foot existed when the work was discovered; see Richter 1988, 53 (no. 16) and the old photographs in Kokkourou-Alewrass 1995, [figs. 24–27](#), and Hurwit 1985, 142, [fig. 60](#). A fragmentary *kouros* (Delos A 4052), preserved from knees to stomach with one hand still at the side, has been thought by some to belong, but the pieces do not join and the association is now usually rejected; see Kokkourou-Alewrass 1995, 84–85 (no. 12a), [fig. 27](#) and pl. 18, and Ridgway 1993, 116 (n. 3.67).
3. Boardman 1991b, [figs. 69](#) (Kriophoros, c. 580) and 112 (Moschophoros, c. 560). It is possible, too, that the statue could have carried a bow or other attributes in its hands, and so, like the later Naxian Colossos, might have been a representation of Apollo himself; see Boardman 1991b, [fig. 60](#).
4. The oblique positioning of *kouroi* upon their bases is not uncommon; see, for example, those from Sounion (e.g., Athens NM 2720) and a base from Delphi (Delphi 2278); Richter 1988, 43 (no. 2 and [fig. 3](#)), and 103 (no. 105 and [fig. 335](#)). The ram's head looks unfinished (though details might have been added in paint).
5. *ID* 1. Floren 1987, 151, believes (following Kontoleon) that an even earlier sculptor's signature is found on another work from Delos (A 2464), a curious marble Daidalic fragment with a poorly preserved four-line metrical inscription (*ID* 3) with the signature *Nassti[ad]es poiesen* carved into its belt; Kokkourou-Alewrass 1995, 82 (no. 8), [fig. 23](#), and Ridgway 1993, 441 (n. 10.29). But neither Hansen 1983, 220–221 (no. 402), nor Jeffery 1990, 292, 304, 465 (9), is confident of a 7th-century date for the inscription, and Kokkourou-Alewrass gives no date. We have here another early sculptor's signature from Delos, but it is probably not earlier than Euthykartides'. On the other hand, there is from the sanctuary of Apollo Ptoios in Boiotia a fragmentary limestone Daidalic *kore* (Athens NM 2) whose peplos is inscribed at the bottom with three fragmentary lines [[Fig. 58](#)]. The last names the sculptor: [... ]OTOS EPOIESE. Jeffrey 1990, 62, 92, 94 (no. 4), uneasily suggests a date of c. 650–625 for the statue, but Karakasi dates it more broadly to the second half of the seventh century, and Kaltsas to the last quarter; Karakasi 2002, 144 and pl. 210; Kaltsas 2002, 39 (no. 16). In any case, the *kore* is in the same chronological ballpark as Euthykartides' statue, and the important point is that sculptors begin to sign their works well before 600 BCE.
6. For a brief description of the principal ancient sources referred to here, see the Appendix. Individual entries on Euthykartides, Nasstiades, and most of the other ancient artists and architects discussed or mentioned in this book can be found in the magisterial *Künstlerlexikon der Antike* originally edited in two volumes (2001 and 2004) by R. Vollkommer.
7. The characterization is Rhys Carpenter's; see Carpenter 1960, v. Carpenter has been followed most notably by his great and influential student, Brunilde S. Ridgway, whose originally more nuanced and less doctrinaire positions appear over several decades to have hardened. In recent work, she refuses (with justification) to conceive of the history of Greek sculpture as simply a history of great personalities and dismisses (with less justification) even the idea of originality or artistic genius; see Ridgway 1993, 427 ("originality was not only unimportant but not even desirable") and 1997, 267.

- Still, in an earlier study she does not “mean to argue against *all* artistic individuality; my position is mostly a question of degrees”; see Ridgway 1981, 5–8 (and n. 8, where she also concedes M. Robertson’s point that “each artistic change must actually be made by an individual”). And in her even earlier book on the Severe Style, Ridgway notes that “some artists were more influential than others [and] had a more original style” and so seems to concede the existence of “major personalities” like Pythagoras of Rhegion (or Samos), even if there is no extant statue that can be definitively attributed to him; Ridgway 1970, 70, 84. For some pointed rebuttals to the currently fashionable academic hostility toward the ideas of artistic personality and originality, see the essays in Seaman and Schultz (forthcoming) and Stewart 2013, esp. 19–21.
8. See Hurwit 1997. “Posthumanism” has been defined (and criticized) by Leon Wieseltier as a worldview, particularly popular in American universities in the 1970s and 1980s but ascendant once again for different reasons, that chooses “to understand the world in terms of impersonal forces and structures, and to deny the importance, and even the legitimacy, of human agency,” see Wieseltier 2015.
  9. Ridgway 1993, 430 (italics hers).
  10. Boardman 1991b, 21. Cf. Burford 1972, 11–12, 165–166, and Richter 1988, 34: “[Euthykartides’s signature] seems to bear out the contention that in the seventh and sixth centuries the manual trades were in high standing.” One very flexible rule of thumb is that it takes a year to carve a life-size marble statue; Stewart 1990, 65, and Ashmole 1972, 22. The cost of transportation might have rivaled that of the marble itself, and to minimize the risk of damage during shipping Euthykartides possibly finished the statue on Delos itself.
  11. For example, Neer 2112, 208.
  12. Burford 1972, 91, cites the case of Argeias, a slave, and Atotas, an ex-slave, who belonged to the workshop of Hageladas and jointly signed a statue at Olympia (W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold, *Olympia V: Die Inschriften von Olympia* [Berlin 1896], no. 631). That is, even slaves were not prohibited from signing their works.
  13. Herodotos 2.167; Xenophon, *Oikonomikos* 4.2–3; Plato, *Republic*, 4.420d5–421a2; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1278a. See also Neer 2002, 89–91.
  14. Lucian, *The Dream, or the Life of Lucian*, 9; Plutarch, *Life of Perikles*, 2.1. For a critical examination of these and other passages, and a reevaluation of the status of the Greek artist in general, see Seaman (forthcoming).
  15. We may note that while vase-painters are never mentioned by name in our sources, wall- or panel-painters are referred to even by their contemporaries or near-contemporaries. The minor 5th-century poet Melanthios, for example, mentioned Polygnotos of Thasos in an elegy about Kimon (Plutarch, *Kimon* 4.6), and Aristophanes admiringly refers to Mikon in the *Lysistrata* (678–679) and to Pauson, Pamphilos, and Zeuxis in the *Acharnians* (853), *Wealth* (383–385), and *Acharnians* (991–992), respectively; see also Seaman (forthcoming).
  16. The voice of the average Greek is not often detected in the usual literary sources, though it is heard in a number of epitaphs where *banausoi* take pride in their own skill. A victim of the Peloponnesian War named Mannes, for example, claimed that he never saw a woodsman better than himself; *IG I<sup>2</sup>* 1084 and Burford 1972, 18.
  17. *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 3089 apparently names Praxiteles as a liturgist; see Corso 1988–1991, 25–27, but also Pasquier and Martinez 2007, 91, 106–108 (no. 15). For Kephisodotos the Younger and his trierarchies (liturgies that had him build or outfit six warships over a span of 10 years), see Schultz (forthcoming) and Stewart 2013, 20–21, and 1990, 71, 295–297.
  18. For Telesinos, see Themelis 1996, 186, Smith 1991, 11–12, and Stewart 1990, 71, 297.
  19. Hardiman (forthcoming); Themelis 1996, 182, 184–185. Damophon was prolific and obviously competent (he was chosen to restore Pheidias’ Zeus at Olympia). But his surviving works are fairly dull, his reputation apparently did not extend beyond the Peloponnesos, and Pliny, apparently, never heard of him; see Smith 1991, 240; Stewart 1990, 303–304.
  20. Geagan 2011, 274–275.
  21. Stewart 1990, 71.
  22. Pliny, *NH* 35.59; Harpokration, *Lexicon*, s.v. Polygnotos.
  23. Pliny, *NH* 35.76–77. The ancient contrast in attitudes toward sculptors and painters reappears in Leonardo da Vinci’s *Treatise on Painting*, where he, no doubt having his younger rival Michelangelo in mind, satirically compares the sculptor (a physical, mechanical laborer, caked



in marble dust mixed with sweat so that he resembles a baker, occupying a noisy house littered in marble chips and filth) to a painter like himself (at ease, well dressed, living and working in a clean house filled with beauty, music, and serenity); see Hibbard 1998, 74–76.

## CHAPTER 2

1. Vollkommer 2014, 110, and 2001, 371, s.v. Kachet (F. Hoffmann).
2. Clayton 1994, 33–34. The text is damaged, however, and can be reconstructed in more than one way.
3. Kemp 1991, 105–106.
4. Vollkommer 2001, 122, s.v. Nefermaat (F. Hoffmann), 292, s.v. Hemiunu (S. L. Lippert). For Hemiunu, see also Smith 1981, 86–87.
5. Wilson 1947, 245.
6. For these figures, see Smith 1981, 270–273 (Amenhotep, son of Hapu), and 226–228 (Senmut). The list of known Egyptian architects includes Inene, who worked for Tuthmosis I, and Hapu-seneb, who also worked for Hatshepsut.
7. Kemp 1991, 105 (his translation).
8. *IG I*<sup>3</sup> 35; Hurwit 2004, 182.
9. Generally, Junker 1959.
10. Wilson 1947, 234. An artist named Mesi is once shown applying color to a statue, but he is elsewhere shown among a group of offering-bearers. He is there recognized because of his intimacy with Ankh-ma-Hor, not because he was an artist.
11. Ware 1927, 188.
12. Schäfer 1974, 62–63.
13. Wilson 1947, 238–239.
14. Vollkommer 2001, 139, s.v. Khentika (C. von Pfeil).
15. Calabrese 2006, 33, pl. 23; Aldred 1980, 87, fig. 47.
16. Cited in a lecture by John Baines (“Who Were Artists in Ancient Egypt and What Audiences Did They Address?”) given at the Institute of Advanced Study (Princeton), October 21, 2009. The Egyptian word for “write” also meant “draw” or “paint,” just as the Egyptian word for “hieroglyph” or “sign” also means “representation.” Another, unusual Old Kingdom example of a “true” signature may be found in an inspection scene on the wall of the 6th Dynasty tomb of Zau, where the outline-draftsman Pepiseneb wrote his name and title in red beside the figure of Zau’s father. This is, in another words, “a signed piece of work;” see Ware 1927, 199.
17. Davis 1989, 13; Smith 1981, 165 and n. 15.
18. Ware 1927, 194–198.
19. Calabrese 2006, 32, pl. 22; Smith 1981, 297, fig. 291. Even the corpulence of the figure is less a sign of Bek’s actual appearance than a characteristic of a broader Amarna style: we cannot be sure he looked like this. Bek carved a great stele at Aswan showing on the right his father, Men, worshipping at a statue of Amenhotep III (presumably one he himself carved) and, on the left, Bek himself adoring Akhenaten. Neither artist is shown making art. Bek here and elsewhere describes himself as “the apprentice whom His majesty taught”; see Aldred 1988, 92–94.
20. For these various artists, see Smith 1981, 271, 297–299; for Iuwti (or Yuti) and Huy, see also Ware 1927, 189, 205 (no. XXVI).
21. Ware 1927, 186, 204 (no. XXII).
22. Vollkommer 2014, 109. There are 20 different New Kingdom artists, draftsmen, and builders named Imenhetep alone; see Vollkommer 2001, 348–351.
23. Schäfer 1974, 63–64. Needless to say, artists whose work would be sealed in tombs might not have expected fame in our sense of the word, much less the aesthetic verdicts of Egyptian Plinys (who did not exist).
24. Smith 1981, 255 and fig. 251.
25. Davis 1989, 110–113.
26. Clayton 1994, 17–18 (Narmer), 108 (Tuthmosis III), 217 (Titus). The hieroglyph-like image of pharaonic victory appears even earlier than Narmer, in a corner of the Predynastic wall-painting from Hierakonpolis.
27. Vollkommer 2014, 110; Vollkommer 2001, 372, s.v. Kaemtjenenet (F. Hoffmann).
28. The situation may, it is true, be more nuanced than this. Subtle changes and variations are almost always apparent in the flow of Egyptian art. Davis 1989, 110, also notes how it is occasionally possible to attribute different works to different sculptors on the basis of style. It is even possible to detect different “hands” at work even in the same passage of hieroglyphs; cf. Schäfer 1974, 65. But for the most part, “the individual artist effectively disappears from view” (Davis 1989, 109).
29. But see Azarpay 1990.
30. Oppenheim 1977, 329.

31. Akkadian, the lingua franca of the Near East, is not well suited to aesthetic appreciations and evidently does not have a word for “fine artist”; Sasson 1990, 22–23. Of course, neither does ancient Greek.
32. Kramer 1963, 101.
33. Sasson 1990, 24, who also notes a letter from a priestess to a jeweler named Ili-iddinam taking him to task for not completing a commissioned necklace. For the forced servitude of the artisan, see Gunter 1990, 12.
34. Aruz 2003, 31, 427; Winter 2007, 44–50.
35. Kent 1933 (his translation); Siebert 1978, 113.
36. *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 476; cf. Burford 1972, 20–21. Another inscription (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 474) mentions the architect Philokles of Acharnai as a member of a board of commissioners inspecting work on the building in 409/408; see also Pollitt 1990, 191–192.
37. But see Gunter 1990.
38. For more on the Aristonothos krater see Chapter 8 in this volume.
39. Since Arnthe Praxias wrote his name and labeled his mythological figures (Chiron, Peleus, Achilles) using Chalkidian Greek letters (the vase is Cabinet des Médailles 913), it is likely he was an immigrant from a Greek colony in south Italy or Sicily who took a common Etruscan personal name (Arnthe) once he settled in Vulci, though it is conceivable that he was Etruscan-born, the son of a Greek immigrant. Since a verb of agency is lacking, it is not clear whether Arnthe Praxias was a potter, painter, or both, and it is not even certain that “Arnthe” and “Praxias,” written on different parts of the pot (“Arnthe” on the handle, “Praxias” on the rim), refer to the same man. See Scarrone 2014; Camporeale 2013, 893–894; cf. 956; de Puma 2013, 148; Wachter 2001, 194–196 (ETR 1–4). For Greek painters of Etruscan tombs, see Hurwit 2015, 84–87; Steingraber 2015, 103–104, and 2006, 65, 281; and Camporeale 2013, 891.
40. Pliny *NH.* 35.157; cf. Plutarch, *Poplicola* 13, who mentions a quadriga but says only that it was made by “some Etruscan artisans from Veii.”
41. Similarly, despite Roman acknowledgment that Etruscan drama influenced their own, our sources mention only one Etruscan playwright by name: Volnius. See Varro, *De lingua latina* V.55. It is unclear when Volnius wrote (though the 1st century BCE is likely) or even whether he wrote in Etruscan or Latin.
42. For these and other inscriptions, see Siebert 1978, 118–119; Agostiniani 2001; and Haynes 2000, 69 and fig. 47.
43. See Beazley 1947, 275 (nos. 1, 2, 3); cf. *Studi Etruschi* 39 (1971), 368 (no. 67). Also Pallottino *TLE* nos. 196, 215, and 903. I am indebted to Larissa Bonfante and Adriana Emiliozzi for their help.
44. Spivey 1997, figs. 170, 171, 184. For the absence of signatures in Etruscan tombs, see Steingraber 2015, 107.
45. Spivey 1987.
46. It is typical that the brief texts on Classical Etruscan gems often label the heroes depicted but almost never the artist or, for that matter, the owner; see Hansson 2013, 934.
47. Cf. Kleiner 1992, 4: “the names of Roman artists, be they native Italians or, as was more usual, men from Greece or Asia Minor, are rarely recorded. This is probably because Roman artists were of low social status since they came from the slave population or from the freedman class and were considered mere artisans.” See also P. Stewart 2008, 14–18.
48. Pliny *NH.* 36.33, 39–40; Ridgway 2002, 157–158. Stephanos signed his works STEPHANOS PASITELOUS MATHĒTĒS EPOIEI (*Stephanos, the pupil of Pasiteles, made*).
49. Pliny *NH.* 35.155–156; 36.41.
50. Ridgway 2002, 147–148.
51. Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 111–112 and fig. 436.
52. Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 121 and fig. 477. A superb amethyst with a portrait of Mark Anthony signed by Gnaios (Boardman 2001b, 365, pl. 1013) is, I am told, now thought to be a 19th-century forgery.
53. Spier 1992, 154.
54. Pliny *NH.* 37.8; Suetonius, *Divine Augustus*, 50. The seal does not survive, though we have a cameo of Tiberius signed by Dioskourides’ son, Herophilos; Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 117 and fig. 471. Another son, Hyllos, was a prolific engraver; see Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 120–121 and figs. 472–475; Boardman 2001b, 365 and pl. 1014.
55. The signature on one cup is Greek but is transliterated into Latin (*Chirisophos epoet*); the other is signed in Greek KHEIRISOPHOS EPOEI. They were perhaps diplomatically presented to a barbarian chief by a Roman general. See Marvin 2008, 183–186; Burford 1972, 216 and pl. 37 (who identifies the artist as an imperial freedman, an identity that Marvin also finds

- plausible; the name, in any case, looks like one acquired during his artistic career).
56. Squire 2012, 614; Stewart 2008, 16; Pollitt 1986, 122–125. The same three artists are credited by Pliny (*NH* 36.37) with a *Laokoon*, usually thought to be the unsigned group discovered in Rome in 1506 and since then on display in the Vatican Belvedere statue court.
  57. The Oplontis strongbox has been dated to the 1st century BCE or earlier; see D’Ambrosio et al. 2003, 158–160 (cat. II.2). I owe the reference to John R. Clarke.
  58. Marvin 2008, 223–224; Pollitt 1986, 169. The ability to reproduce skillfully was regarded as great a talent as the ability to invent, and so, as Marvin notes (224), “Owning a perfect copy could mean owning a different kind of masterpiece.”
  59. Pliny *NH* 34.45–47.
  60. For the portraits signed by Zenas and Zenas II, see Loewy 1885, 268–269 (No. 383), and P. Stewart 2008, 16. For the centaurs (Musei Capitolini 656 and 658), each of which had an Eros on his back, see Smith 1991, 132; Pollitt 1986, 133. For Ridgway 2000, 282–283, on the other hand, the didactic contrast between the two centaurs seems “entirely Roman.”
  61. The Neikias mosaic is on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (L.2013.29). For the Prokolos mosaic, see Pappalardo and Ciardello 2012, 36, who also note the signature of a Greek named Amphion on a mosaic of 4th-century CE Baalbek.
  62. Moreno 1995, 244–245 (no. 4.36.4).
  63. Vollkommer 2014, 116.
  64. Pliny *NH* 36.41, 32. Coponius’ statues, though not Coponius, are mentioned in Suetonius, *Nero* 46. Avianius Evander is also mentioned in Horace, *Satires* I.3.90, and is possibly referred to in a letter of Cicero; see Pollitt 1996, 78–79, 89. For a few minor sculptors who signed their names in Latin, see Burford 1972, 214. For a seminal study of Roman artists in general, see Calabi Limentani 1958.
  65. Statius, *Silvae* I, 1.
  66. Pliny *NH* 35.154. The Temple of Ceres was dedicated in 493 BCE; see Richardson 1992, 80–81.
  67. The epigram began with the phrase *dignis digna* (meaning something like “a worthy reward comes to those worthy of it”); Pliny *NH* 35.115; Ling 1991, 212; Pollitt 1966, 52 and ns. 97 and 98. A later painter named Marcus Plautius Menekrates – undoubtedly a freedman whose last name indicates his Greek origin – signed the architrave of a 2nd-century CE building in Rome; see *CIL* 6.9790 and P. Stewart 2008, 17.
  68. Pliny *NH* 35.147–148. Ling 1991, 212.
  69. Valerius Maximus 8.14.6 (who also notes that his aristocratic family was not terribly proud of his vocation); Pliny *NH* 35.19.
  70. Pliny *NH* 35.19–20. Cf. *NH* 35.76–77, where Pliny seems to indicate that the Greeks had a different attitude toward the art.
  71. Pliny *NH* 35.20 (Turpilius); 35.116–117 (Studijs); 35.120 (Famulus, Cornelius Pinus, Atticus Priscus). For Studijs and landscapes, see also Ling 1991, 142, 144, 148–149, and for the status of the Roman painter in general, 212–214.
  72. Vitruvius VII, praef. 15. Cossutius was a Roman citizen, but may have originally been a Greek from south Italy; see Pollitt 1986, 316 n. 15.
  73. Tacitus, *Annales*, XV. 42 (trans. J. J. Pollitt).
  74. Martial VII.56.
  75. Bodnar 2003, 78–81; Ashmole 1956, esp. 187–188 and pl. 37a. The signature is known from the manuscripts and drawings of the 15th-century traveler Cyriacus of Ancona.
  76. Dio Cassius 69.4.1–5.
  77. The full signature can be read as TR[EBIOS] POMPONIO[S] C. [F?] [M]E FECET ROMA[I]. (*Trebius Pomponios, son of Caius, made me in Rome*). The sword was found in 2003 at San Vittore by D. Sacco, who publishes the inscription in *R.E.L.*90–2012. The original notice of the discovery can be found at <http://www.sanniti.info/spadavittore.html>.
  78. *CIL* I.651. Ramage and Ramage 2009, 64–65. On the inscription, which is written on the plinth on which Dionysos stands between two satyrs, see Dohrn 1972, 26–27. Around 200 BCE, a certain Caius Pomponius signed a bronze statuette of Jupiter, probably from Orvieto. Vollkommer 2014, 116, calls this “the earliest signature by a Roman artist,” but this is so only if one excludes Trebius Pomponios and Novios Plautios.
  79. Boardman 2009, 96–98 (no. 165); 2001b, 363.2, 365, and pl. 1015.
  80. Vollkommer 2004, 22, s.v. Lucius (R. Ling); Ling 1991, 213. Lucius himself may have been a Greek freedman. Also Burford 1972, 214–215, for Aemilius Celer, who “in the

moonlight” wrote and signed an advertisement for a gladiatorial contest.

81. This Felix (“Happy,” “Fortunate”) came from Puteoli but signed a mosaic at Lillebonne in Gaul (also naming his assistant, Amor, “Love”); see Pappalardo and Ciardiello 2012, 38. Vollkommer 2014, 128 (Appendix 2), counts 37 named Roman mosaicists. See also Burford 1972, 91, 215, who points out that Latin mosaicists could be more specific in their signatures than the average Greek, some saying they “tesellated” or “mosaic’d” their work (as in the case of Neikias, above, n. 61).
82. See Oxé and Comfort 2000; Hayes 1997, 41–59.
83. Plutarch, *Brutus*, 1; Dionysios 5.25.2; Suetonius, *Domitian* 5.
84. The inscription C. VIBI RVFI (C. Vibius Rufus), however, appears on a fragment of a Caryatid from the Forum of Augustus, and the name may be that of the sculptor; P. Stewart 2008, 17 n. 26.
85. *CIL* 10.6126. Stewart 2008, 16; Burford 1972, 214.
86. *CIL* 10.841. Richardson 1988, 79.
87. *CIL* 2.761; Ramage and Ramage 2009, 225–226; Taylor 2003, 10 (his translation).
88. Vollkommer 2014, 128 (Appendix 2) counts 548 Roman artists whose names we know. But not all of these are known through signatures, and the number is, in any case, less than half the number of Greek artists whose names we know (1,281) – less than a third if we add the 436 known Greek artists who worked during the Roman Empire. The Roman figure is even much less than the number of known Egyptian artisans (above, n. 22). On the other hand, the ratios vary greatly genre by genre. For example, there are 10 named Greek sculptors for every Roman one (711 to 70), but 12 named Roman metalworkers for every Greek (198 to 16).
89. This builder, who has long been credited with the Hephaisteion, the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion, the Temple of Ares in the Athenian Agora (once the Temple of Athena at Pallene, reerected in the Agora and renamed in the early Roman imperial period), and the Temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous, was born in 1940, the product of connoisseurship and circular reasoning. M. Miles (forthcoming) demonstrates that the four temples cannot in fact be attributed to the same architect and so the Theseum Architect lives no more.
90. Cf. Stewart 1990, 23.

### CHAPTER 3

1. Other examples of sculptors dedicating the statues they themselves made include Euandros, who in the mid-6th century made a “very beautiful statue” for Athena at Halai. As in the case of Euthykartides’ dedication/signature, the verb *anetheke* (“dedicated”) precedes the participle *poiōn* (“having made”); *CEG* 348 and Bowie 2010, 327.
2. Cf. Sparkes 2011, 149.
3. For signatures in other “lesser” genres (such as molded terracotta figurines, lamps, tiles, antefixes, and glassware), see Siebert 1978, 119–123. As for textiles, the names of weavers as well as owners or dedicants could be woven into cloth. The famous and venerable Akesas and Helikon may have signed the first Panathenaic peplos; Helikon certainly signed other robes. Pollitt 1990, 209–210; also Linders 1972, 9 n. 13.
4. I know of no firm estimate for the total number of surviving Greek gems. But one comprehensive catalogue lists nearly a thousand Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic examples (Boardman 2001b). Henig 1994, catalogues 60 Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic gems and intaglios in the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge) alone. And Plantzos 1999 lists over seven hundred Hellenistic gems (though many of them were executed for Romans).
5. De Callatay 2012, 246, puts the number of signatures on gems at less than two dozen, but Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 549–550, lists over fifty. Vollkommer 2014, 130 (Appendix 3), lists four Archaic gem engravers known by name, four Classical, and 29 Hellenistic, for a total of 37.
6. Zazoff 1983, 101–102. Of these five, only Epimenes and Anakles appear among Zwierlein-Diehl’s list (above, n. 5).
7. For Epimenes, who may have been an islander, see Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 41 and fig. 97; Boardman 2001b, 148.
8. For Bion’s gem, see Boardman 2001b, 152 and fig. 197; for Kreontidas’ scarab in the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge), see Henig 1994, 26 (no. 43).
9. Boardman 2001b, 152, 185 and pl. 388. If ARISTOTEIKHĒS is considered an artist’s signature, it is hard to see why the nominative STĒSIKRATĒS on a gem in New York should not be considered one, too; see Zazoff 1983, 102, n. 16; Boardman 1968, 150, 153 (no. 561).
10. For Ermotimos and Semon’s gems, see Boardman 2001b, 148, 152, and pls. 358 (Semon) and 394 (Ermotimos); Boardman (*ibid.*, 236)

entertains the possibility that Semon and other names written in the genitive could be the names of artists.

11. For Mnesarkhos, see Diogenes Laertius VIII.1 and Apuleius, *Florida* XV; for Theodoros, architect, sculptor, and metalworker, as well as the maker of the emerald and gold “Ring of Polykrates,” see Pollitt 1990, 27, 215–216, and Herodotos 3.41. Pliny *NH* 37.8 says the gem of Polykrates – at least, a gem he was told was Polykrates’ – was “uncut and untouched,” and so would have lacked an image or a signature. But Strabo 14.1.16 says Polykrates’ ring was splendidly engraved, and earlier (*NH* 37.4) Pliny also says the gem was sardonyx, so we are dealing with at least two different stones; cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* III.12.1.
12. See Zazoff 1983, 83–84, 101–102 and n. 16; Boardman 1968, 176–177; Osborne 2010, 242–243. There are a few other kinds of inscriptions on Archaic and Classical gems: for example, on an agate scarab reportedly from Aegina there is THERSIOS EMISAMA MEMEAN OIGE (*I am the seal of Thersis: do not open me*); on a scaraboid in London the gem-cutter has written KHAIRE (*greetings!*) below a chimaera; on a rock crystal disk in Athens there is, at the end of a semiliterate, four-line inscription, the phrase OU THEMIS ESTI (*it is not right . . .*); Boardman 1968, nos. 20, 176 and 447; Zazoff 102 and n. 17. There are occasionally names in the dative, indicating the recipient of a gift of the ring as well as the donor (such as PAR-MENON BASILEI on a gold ring in London). And there are also labels identifying the subject: for example, a mourning woman on a mid-5th-century scaraboid in the Fitzwilliam is labeled PENELOP[E]; Henig 1994, 34 (no. 54); also Boardman 2001b, 236–237.
13. Zazoff 1983, 132–141.
14. For Dexamenos and works in his style, see Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 49–50; Boardman 2001b, 194–199.
15. It would seem either that his features were so recognizable that no name was needed – is this a self-portrait? – or that this is not really a portrait.
16. Robertson 1975, 362.
17. Boardman 2001b, 236 and pl. 467.
18. According to Boardman 2001b, 206, 236, 293 (pl. 590), the only letters that can be made out are a *nu* and a *delta* – possibly an abbreviation for an unknown artist’s name – with the other markings being decorative. The loss of Onatas from the list of signing Classical gem-cutters might be compensated for by the addition of Athenades and Anaxiles, whose names (in the nominative) appear on rings in St. Petersburg and London; Boardman 2001b, 236 and 297 (pls. 681 and 688).
19. Boardman 2001b, 201 and 290 (pl. 531); Zazoff 1983, 139 and fig. 41c.
20. On coins, for example; see Chapter Four in this volume.
21. Zazoff 1983, 205–208; Plantzos 1999, 146; see also Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 109–132, and, again, 549–550 for her list of 57 gem-cutters whose signatures we have (the majority being Greeks working in a Roman environment). For Boardman 2001b, 9, “the story of Hellenistic engraving belongs rather with that of the Roman period.” In another context, Pollitt 1986, 208, argues that “late Hellenistic” works of the first century BCE should be termed “Greco-Roman.”
22. For Daidalos’ and Rufus’ gems and signatures (DAIDALOC and ROUPHOC EPOEI, respectively), see Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 108, 112 and figs. 427, 437.
23. Plantzos 1999, 97. Dioskourides does not appear in Zazoff’s list of Hellenistic gem-cutters.
24. Plantzos 1999, 114 (no. 30, signed NIKAN-DROS EPOIEI) and 115 (no. 71, signed simply APOLLONIOS; cf. no. 101). For Nikias, see Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 72, and fig. 262.
25. Pliny *NH* 7.125, 37.8. For Pyrgoteles and his possible influence on gems and coins (which he presumably also designed for Alexander), see Pollitt 1986, 22–25; also Stewart 1993, 25–27, 35–36. Suetonius, *Divine Augustus* 50, tells us that Augustus once used as his seal a gem with Alexander’s portrait but mentions no signature (unlike the famous gem portraying Augustus himself cut and presumably signed by Dioskourides).
26. For Archaic and Classical usage, see Boardman and Wagner 2012, 207; Boardman 2001b, 237–238; Plantzos 1999, v, and 18–22 for Hellenistic gems used as seals.
27. In the *Epitrepontes*, or *Arbitrants* (lines 384–390), a gilded iron ring engraved with the figure of a bull or goat (the speaker cannot tell which) and made by one Kleostratos – “so the letters say” – belongs to a cache of trinkets left with an abandoned baby. The ring ultimately identifies



the foundling as the son of Kharisios, and so the resolution of the comedy hinges upon it. There seems something topical about the reference to Kleostratos, as if the artist (otherwise unknown to us) would have been familiar to Menander's early Hellenistic audience (is there a joke there somewhere? in Kleostratos' apparent inability to carve a recognizable animal?). Still, the ring might be as fictional as everything else in the play. I owe the reference to J. Gaunt.

28. Boardman 2001b, 237.
29. Plantzos 1999, 105.
30. One Parthenon inventory lists the contents of a single box containing a *sphragis* (the word for gem or sealstone) set in a gold ring, two glass seals with golden chains, an onyx seal having a gold ring, a jasper seal having a gold ring, and so on, but there is no indication that any of these seals or rings was signed; see Harris 1995, 51–52 (no. 37) and Plantzos 1999, 12–15. For the story of the ring of Polykrates, see Herodotos 3.40–43, and n. 11 above.
31. The poem attributed to Plato (*Greek Anthology* 9.747) describes a jasper engraved with five cows that were so realistic that they would wander off if not corralled by the gold hoop into which the stone was set.
32. *Greek Anthology* 9.544; cf. Henig 1994, x–xi.
33. Like the cameo (with its scene of Eros and Psyche), the gem could be considered either late Hellenistic or late Roman Republican or just “Greco-Roman;” see above n. 21. For Tryphon and the cameo (Boston 99.101, once owned by Rubens), see Boardman 2009, 30–35 (no. 1), who notes the small possibility that the signature is post-antique; also Zwierlein-Diehl 2007, 113 and fig. 442; Vollenweider 1966, pl. 28, no. 1; Zazoff 1983, 289; and Henig 1994, xiii–xiv.
34. Cf. Boardman and Wagner 2012, 209: “the quality of many of the unsigned pieces equals and surpasses that of the signed.”

## CHAPTER 4

1. For Phrygillos' gems and coins (Syracusan tetradrachms), see Zwierlein-Diehl 1992. Olympios is another possibility; see Jenkins 1972, 16–18, who also notes that, since gem-cutting is the older art and the technique so similar, the very first dies may have been the work of gem artists. For a cautious approach see also Plantzos 1999, 64–65.
2. Two very early coins from Ionia, dated c. 600 BCE, have PHANEOS (“of Phanes,” or “[I am] Phanes”) and PHANOS EMI SĒMA (“I am the badge [or sign] of Phanes”) written on them, suggesting that the coins were minted under the authority of Phanes, whoever he was, rather than his city, whatever it was (Ephesos is a possibility); see Fort 1996; Robertson 1975, 149. The self-awareness or “egocentricity” of these coins is comparable to that of many inscribed vases and other works of art; see the Preface and Glossary (s.v. “egocentric”).  
As Jenkins 1972, 17, and Kraay 1976, 7, 232, both note, it is often hard to tell whether the names or initials found on coins belong to artists, mint-officials, or owners of ateliers under contract to the state; cf. Holloway 1991, 131, who suggests that Eumenos and Eukleidas, for example, were owners of workshops in Syracuse. It is also possible that in some cities the best die-cutters were eventually promoted to the ranks of mint officials.
3. Actually, what one normally finds is the “ethnic” – the name of the people of the city, not the name of the city itself (“of the Athenians” rather than “Athens”). Occasionally, other texts besides the city name or ethnic are found – identifying labels, for example, such as DIOSKOUROI on a coin of Tarentum; Jenkins 1972, fig. 444. For the number of extant coins, see De Callatay 2012, 235.
4. In the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE “New Style” Athenian silver coins could also be inscribed with the month of issue, the name of the citizen magistrate (or even foreign rulers, such as Mithridates of Pontos) responsible for the minting, and other symbols.
5. See Jenkins 1972, 217 and figs. 534 and 535.
6. de Callatay 2012, 246, puts Theodotos on the island of Kos. Others place him at Klazomenae: Vollkommer 2004, 454, s.v. “Theodotos II” (A. Furtwängler), and Kraay 1976, 258.
7. For Apatorios, see Arnold-Biucchi 2013, 185 n. 11, and de Callatay 2012, 247. Kraay 1976, 118 (Telephanes; see also Pliny, *NH* 34.68); 105 (Da...); 107 (Olym...); 7 (Polyka...); for Neuantos and Menetos, see de Callatay 2012, 246–247.
8. For Hellenistic signatures on coins, see de Callatay 1995. Vollkommer 2014, 130 (Appendix 3), tabulates 42 known Classical and five Hellenistic die engravers, for a total of 47.



9. Kraay 1976, 191, 199 (Kleudoros and Philistion), 196 (Molossos), 198 (Dossenno). See also Rutter 1997, 76, 81, 92.
10. For Aristoxenos, see Vollkommer 2001, 93–94, s.v. “Aristoxenos” (G. Bröker).
11. The name Polykr[ates] was once typically read on some coins of Akragas, but Polyai[nos] is now the accepted reading; Vollkommer 2004, 270, s.v. “Polyai. . . (U. Westermark).  
The names Silanos and Straton also appear on coins of Akragas, but because of their “prominence and large size” they are usually considered those of magistrates, not engravers; Rutter 2012, 75, 77. However, on the coins of Syracuse, names uniformly considered those of engravers can be just as (or even more) conspicuous; cf. Fig. 18.
12. See Rutter 2012, 74–75, for a table of all known Sicilian die-cutters who signed their names. Arnold-Biucchi 2013 and 2008, 16, notes that the excellence of Syracusan coins was acknowledged in their own time; also Kraay 1976, 220–233; cf. n. 30 below. Holloway 1991, 124–125, emphasizes the originality of Syracusan coinage in general.
13. In most coinages, the obverse is usually the “heads” side of the coin. At Syracuse, there are some issues with the head of Arethusa on the obverse and the quadriga on the reverse, but they are not typical; see Kraay 1976, 222.
14. But it cannot be assumed, when one side of a coin is signed and the other not, that the same artist cut both dies.
15. There are plenty of other variations within the formula. Most often Arethusa is shown in profile, but occasionally she is facing front; sometimes her hair is neatly coiffed, sometimes her locks seem to flow in a manner befitting a water nymph; sometimes she seems assimilated to other goddesses (such as Artemis or Persephone or the nymph Kyane) or is replaced by Athena. At first the Nike seems ready to put the wreath on the head of a horse; later, she prepares to crown the charioteer. The identity of the charioteer changes, too: he is sometimes winged and can even be replaced by Persephone. So, too, the exergue below can be empty or filled with broken wheels, panoplies, barley, sea-monsters, or the word SYRAKOSIŌN.
16. Kraay 1976, 221–222. Rutter 2012, 74, dates Euainetos’s Kamarina coins to c. 413–405, his Katane coins to 405–402, and his Syracusan coins to between 413 and 400 (and beyond).
17. Rutter 2012, 74–75, whose dates I also use here; also Rutter 1997, 145; Jenkins 1972, 159–169; and Kraay 1976, 383–385 (whose list is shorter).
18. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 765–772, refers to the *hyalos*, a kind of “beautiful, transparent stone” (a convex crystal lens?) that was commonly used to kindle fires and that was available at any drugstore. The play was produced in 423 BCE.
19. de Callatay 2012, 248.
20. Jenkins 1972, 161 (figs. 396, 397). Holloway 1991, 132, suggests, however, that Phrygillos worked in the atelier of Euth. . . .
21. Kraay 1976, 221. Also, Arnold-Biucchi 2013, 179, and De Callatay 2012, 247, fig. 12.7. At Akragas Myr. . . and Polyai. . . signed the obverse and reverse of some of the same tetradrachms, and so may have collaborated; Kraay 1976, 226–227.
22. In fact, however, the very first Sicilian die-engraver to sign his name was from Katane: he signed tetradrachms minted c. 430 BCE with the abbreviation KRA. The careers of at least two of the “signing masters” from Syracuse – Kimon and Euainetos – may have extended down to the 370s, see Rutter 2012, 75; also Arnold-Biucchi 2013, 183, and 2008, 19–20; Holloway 1991, 130–135. The fundamental work on the signing masters remains Tudeer 1913.
23. Fischer-Bossert 2012, 151; for Kimon and the coinage of Dionysios I, see also Bérend 1993 and Jongkees 1941.
24. According to Thucydides (7.82.3), the coins taken from the Athenians who surrendered filled the hollows of four shields.
25. What ATHLA are meant is debatable, but it is likely that they are the coins themselves, awarded as prizes in competitions staged by Dionysios I; see Arnold-Biucchi 2008, 21–22; Kraay 1976, 223–224; Jenkins 1972, 175.
26. Rutter 2012, 78–79, also suggests that rivalries between cities may help explain signatures on coins minted at Sicilian cities other than Syracuse. If, as Holloway 1991, 130, suggests Euainetos began his career at Katane (which was an Athenian base during the Sicilian Expedition), he may have moved to victorious Syracuse after the expedition’s disastrous end in 413. Rutter 1997, 117, 144, himself cautions that general correlations between coinage and history are not easily made. But the minting of

gold coins can usually be linked to times of crisis or emergency, and so it is no surprise after all that Syracuse's first gold coins seem to have been minted after Dionysios I seized power in 405 and needed high-value coins with which to pay his mercenaries (or to award them as prizes in competitions held to motivate his soldiers); cf. Arnold-Biucchi 2013, 182–183, and 2008, 21–22; Kraay 1976, 224; Jenkins 1972, 175.

27. Tudeer 46; Jenkins 1972, 161 (figs. 394, 395). EUAI[NETOS] also appears on the neck of a river-god found on a didrachm issued by Kamarina; Jenkins 1972, 169 (fig. 424).
28. Neer 2012, 314, fig. 12.25a.
29. Tudeer 37; Jenkins 1972, 160–161, fig. 393.
30. Athena had an important temple high on Syracuse's island of Ortygia, so her appearance on this coinage is not surprising. But this Athena, with her elaborate three-crested helmet, looks very much like the Athena Parthenos inside the Parthenon. The expropriation of this *particular* Athena may implicitly celebrate Syracuse's victory over Athens; Rutter 2012, 79–80; but see also Kraay 1976, 222. Obviously influenced by Eukleidas' work, Kleudoros wrote his name across the brim of Athena's helmet on a mid-4th century stater from Velia in south Italy; Jenkins 1972, fig. 473.
31. Neer 2012, 314, fig. 12.24.
32. Tudeer 81, 78; Jenkins 1972, 168, figs. 418, 419; Kraay 1976, 222–223.
33. Jongkees 7. Eumenos similarly signs the headband of Arethusa on a tetradrachm of c. 410 BCE; Tudeer 7; Jenkins 1972, fig. 390.

The way the Sicilian “signing masters” integrate their names into their coin devices, the way they hide them in plain sight, or abbreviate them, or have them seem to disappear below locks of hair – all this uncannily anticipates by many centuries certain conceits in Medieval and Renaissance art. For example, Duccio's only signature (asking the holy mother of God for peace for Siena and life for himself “because he painted thee thus”) wraps around the sides of the low base of the throne in his *Maestà* (1311): the signature is full and clear, but it is an adornment, part of the image – an “integrated signature” that a Siennese (especially an illiterate one) might at first glance have mistaken for pure ornament, just as a Syracusan with a coin in his hand might not have immediately or easily recognized Euainetos' or Kimon's name in the tiny strokes on its dolphins or exergual lines, or spotted Eukleidas' name in the

decoration of a helmet. So, too, Raphael is well known for inconspicuously signing on the garments of his subjects; for example, the abbreviation RVSM – for *Raphael Vrbinas Sua Manu* – appears on the neckline of Euclid's tunic in the *School of Athens*, and RAPHAEL VRBINAS is written across the edge of Mary's bodice in the *Canigiani Madonna* in Munich; see Goffen 2003 (esp. 129–130). And just as Kimon's signature on Arethusa's headband can vanish beneath her curly hair, Michelangelo's longer signature on the Vatican *Pietà* loses its last letter beneath the Virgin's veil; see Chapter Eleven, n. 12, in this volume.

A related but distinct conceit is found again in the Hellenistic period, when, for example, the name of Nikokles, king of Cyprus, is hidden in the mane of the lion-skin cap Herakles wears on a silver tetradrachm minted c. 320 BCE; see De Callatay 2012, 247 and fig. 12.8.

34. So, for example, Rutter 2012, 71, 81, apparently taking the ancient intellectual bias against manual labor and *banauoi* as gospel (as if Plutarch and Xenophon ought to be *our* arbiters of the matter), excludes die-cutters from the ranks of “artists” and puts them firmly in the less prestigious category of “craftsmen.” He does so because their work was not “individual, personal, spontaneous and authentic” (whatever “authentic” means), like the works of Michelangelo, and because their coins were made “within a well-defined tradition.” But one sets the bar pretty high with Michelangelo. And if working within a well-defined tradition disqualifies a signing die-engraver like Euainetos (who actually revised that tradition) from being considered an “artist,” then it should also disqualify sculptors of Archaic kouroi and korai and Byzantine icon-painters and mosaicists and Medieval sculptors and Italian Renaissance painters of countless stereotypical Madonnas (signed and unsigned) hanging on the walls of cathedrals and museums: their iconographic traditions were often just as well-defined, and instances of true “self-expression” just as hard to find. One cannot fairly criticize the Romanticism that wants to make “Artists” out of die-engravers and then implicitly criticize die-engravers for not being Romantic (that is, individual, personal, spontaneous, “authentic,” and self-expressive) or Michelangelesque enough. But wondering whether Euainetos or Kimon were “artists” or “craftsmen” is not the most important thing

we should wonder about them, and in ancient art (at least) the distinction is pointless.

35. Signatures of Sicilian sculptors are virtually nonexistent in any period, though around 600 BCE one Sphyllos did sign a limestone group of a warrior on horseback found at Castiglione; Vollkommer 2004, 418, s.v. Sphyllos (R. Vollkommer).
36. Especially since there are those cases (such as the tetradrachm seen in Figs. 17 and 18) where two different artists signed opposite sides of the same coin; cf. Kraay 1976, 221.

## CHAPTER 5

1. Thompson and Wycherley 1972, 106–107, and n. 121. The stoa was certainly meant to show Attalos II's appreciation for the happy days he spent as a youth at school in Athens.
2. Generally, see Umholz 2002.
3. Jeffery 1990, 156–158 and 168 (no. 7).
4. Umholz 2002, 265–266; Pausanias 10.11.5.
5. Jeffery 1990, 104 (no. 21). But see Umholz 2002, 270–271, for a different interpretation.
6. Jeffery 1990, 135, and Umholz 2002, 271 n. 41.
7. Pausanias 6.19.12–15. The date of the Geloon treasury is c. 540 BCE.
8. Umholz 2002, 268–270.
9. Jeffery 1990, 110–111, 112 (n. 4), 439 (n. 4); Williams 1982. The limestone is soft but unweathered, suggesting that the inscription was somehow protected (by a ledge or railing above, perhaps).
10. Wescoat 2012, 50 (fig. 26b) and 56; Jeffery 1990, 477 (Aiolic Area B). It is possible the inscription was cut only after the capital fell from its original position (where it would have been very difficult to read).
11. Raubitschek 1949, 359–364, no. 329 (“Patrokles [*sic*] was not the mason but the dedicator”). Cf. Hurwit 1999, 105–106; Umholz 2002, 266–267. I am not certain that the consensus is correct. In any case, the inscription on another 6th-century altar (parts of which were found on the north slope of the Acropolis and in the Agora) is similarly ambiguous: *Thareleides and Thoupeithes made the altar to Athena*; see Geagan 2011, 7–8 (A6) and 276.
12. Thucydides 6.54.6–7. For the surviving dedicatory inscription on the altar the same Peisistratos set up in the sanctuary of Apollo Pythios, see Umholz 2002, 267–268.
13. Thompson and Wycherley 1972, 117–119; Hurwit 1985, 264–265.
14. Boardman 1991b, 160–161.
15. Plutarch, *Perikles* 14; also Umholz 2002, 287–288.
16. The Thermon panels are no longer regarded as true “metopes”; see Barletta 2001, 38–39, 67–68.
17. For the Kalydon metopes, see Jeffery 1990, 226–227 (no. 3); for the painted inscriptions on the Sikyonian metopes, see Boardman 1991b, fig. 208; for those on the Siphnian Treasury frieze, see Brinkmann 1985 and 1994 (the carved sculptor's signature on the north frieze will be discussed in Chapter 10). Also Hurwit 1990, 183.
18. Touloupa 1986, 144 (who believes that the letters belong to the signature of the architectural sculptor); Hurwit 1990, 183; Ridgway 1993, 443 (n. 10.35).
19. Ridgway 1997, 49. The figures, which were carved separately and attached to the metopes in a technique similar to that of the Erechtheion frieze, are so fragmentary that without the inscriptions below we would have a difficult time telling what subjects were shown.
20. Smith 1991, 159. The names of the gods were inscribed on the cavetto molding above the dentils of the entablature, the giants' (for the most part) on the lower molding or socle. The inscriptions were filled with red paint for easy viewing.
21. See Hellmann 1994. Winter 2006, 237–238, concludes that in the Archaic and even the Classical periods “‘architects’ were little more than skilled stonemasons and construction tradesmen,” that they were thus not as highly regarded as sculptors and painters, and that sharp distinctions between trained architects and trained engineers do not seem to have been made until the Hellenistic period.
22. Svenson-Evers 1996, lists the names of nearly 60 builders from the Archaic and Classical periods alone. Vollkommer 2014, 128 (Appendix 2) counts 93 named Greek architects (and three more architects who were also sculptors) dating from before the Roman Empire, and 52 more Greek architects who worked during the Empire.
23. For the controversy over the inscription, see Jeffery 1990, 265 and n. 5, and 275 (no. 3); Holloway 1991, 73 (who notes that “the verb ‘to make’ rather than ‘to dedicate’ implies a more active role in the project than we usually expect from donors or officials”); Ridgway 1993, 442 (n. 10.35); Svenson-Evers

- 1996, 461–469; Umholz 2002, 263–264; and Neer 2012, 127, who accepts the idea that Kleomenes was the architect and suggests he may have been imported from Knidos to do the job.
24. Ridgway 1993, 442–443 (n. 10.33 and 10.35). For the Samian bridge and the inscription (in which Eurykles and Kharmophilos use the verb *epoion*), see Dunst 1972, 124–127 (no. 11), fig. 2, and pl. 51. For the Ionic shrine at Biga, see Koenigs 1989, 289–295, and Svenson-Evers 1996, 112–115.
25. The signature curves slightly up, and then bends sharply down at the right edge of the stone, because the evidently unpracticed Parmenon did not plan ahead. For the well-built wall, see Frederiksen 2011, 194–195; the inscription is located near the Gate of Herakles and Dionysos. Burford 1972, 215, dates the wall a little later (494–491) and believes it deserved a signature, even if Parmenon’s talent as a letterer did not equal his talent as a mason. Jeffery 1990, 302 and 307, no. 69b, notes that Parmenon signed “with others.”
26. *IvO* 651. Svenson-Evers 1996, 380–387; Umholz 2002, 283–284. Pausanias 5.15.2 says Leonidas was a local Elean and that he dedicated the hotel. But this is the result of misreading the dedication; elsewhere at Olympia Pausanias says he saw a statue of “Leonidas the Naxian,” presumably the same man (6.16.5).
27. See Coulton 1977, 18, who also points out that Vitruvius mentions a book on proportion written by a Leonidas (though this is not necessarily our Leonidas – the name was not uncommon).
28. Strabo, *Geography* 17.1.6; Lucian, *How to Write History*, 62 (trans. M. D. Macleod).
29. Posidippos’s epigram is copied on a papyrus in the Louvre (7172); Pliny *NH* 36.83; Lucian, *Hippias, or the Bath*, 2. See also McKenzie 2007, 42; Winter 2006, 92–93, 237, and 297 n. 194, who suggests that Sostratos may already have constructed a lighthouse at Knidos before moving on to Alexandria.
30. For the lighthouse generally, see McKenzie 2007, 41–45; Tomlinson 1992, 104–105.
2. Pliny *NH* 35.16. Cf. Aristotle, *Topica* 140a21–22 (“Just as in the case of ancient paintings, unless someone wrote upon them, no one would know what each thing was”) and Aelian, *Varia Historia*. 10.10, who just as uncharitably remarks that in the infancy of art unskilled painters needed to write beside their figures “this is a cow, this is a horse, this is a tree” because otherwise no one would be sure what they were. But the practice of labeling figures never dies out completely and is found in Hellenistic works as well (see n. 33 below).
3. For example, around 514 BCE Darius, King of Persia, commanded the Samian architect or engineer Mandrokles to build a pontoon bridge across the Bosporos. Greatly pleased, Darius showered Mandrokles with gifts, and with the proceeds he commissioned a painting – the name of the artist is unknown – showing the bridge, Darius, and the Persian army marching across it. Mandrokles dedicated the painting in the sanctuary of Hera on Samos. It was still hanging there in the middle of the 5th century, when Herodotos (4.88) saw it and transcribed the dedication written upon it:  

*Having spanned the fish-filled Bosporos,  
Mandrokles dedicated  
this to Hera, a memorial of his bridge of  
boats;  
he bestowed a crown upon himself, and  
brought glory to the  
Samians, and accomplished it all by the will  
of King Darius.*
4. Vollkommer 2014, 115, and Hurwit 2012 and 2015.
5. For the date of the Lesche, see Kebirc 1983, 9–11, who ties it to, and dates it immediately after, the Battle of the Eurymedon, which he in turn dates to 469. Eurymedon, however, probably took place a few years later, around 466, and the Lesche and its paintings cannot be more precisely dated than “the late 460s” or even just “around 460;” see Stansbury-O’Donnell 2005, 81–82. For the Lesche paintings in particular and Polygnotos generally, see also Mugione 2006 and Roscino 2010.
6. Pausanias 10.25.2–27.4; Stansbury-O’Donnell 1989, 205. As indebted as we are to Pausanias, his description may not be completely without error or omission: he does not mention Hekabe or Aeneas, for example. Aeneas would already have fled before the moment(s) depicted in the

## CHAPTER 6

1. Painters of *pinakes* (small plaques of wood or terracotta) will be treated along with vase-painters, since they seem to have been drawn from their ranks.

painting, but it is difficult to believe Polygnotos would have missed the opportunity to depict Hekabe, whose pathos is so essential to the story as it is normally told.

7. Plutarch, *Kimón*, 4.6.
8. Pausanias 10.25.3.
9. Pausanias 10.27.4; Page 1981, 274. One reconstruction would place the inscription on the south wall of the Lesche, just to the right of the doorway for someone entering the room; see Stansbury-O'Donnell 1989, 211–212.
10. Stansbury-O'Donnell 2015, 147, plausibly suggests Polygnotos went to Delphi only after his patron, Kimon, was exiled from Athens in 461. But even if we accept an early date for the painting (469/468) and place Simonides' death in 468 (where it is most often put), there was not much time or reason for Polygnotos to send the offer of a two-line commission by ship to Akragas and to await a response from an old man in the last months of his life. There were other, closer poets to hire.
11. Cf., for example, Pausanias 10.25.3, 10.26.1, 10.26.2. Elsewhere, Pausanias notes that Polygnotos painted a scene of Odysseus and the maidens of Phaiakia "exactly as Homer described it" (1.22.6).
12. Even true (as opposed to dry) fresco might have required some routine maintenance, given the regular use of the Lesche as a meeting room and banquet hall. In addition, the southeast corner of the building was damaged and rebuilt in the late 4th century, which would have necessitated at least some repainting; see Stansbury-O'Donnell 1989, 210 and n. 24. For the opinion that the *Ilioupersis* was painted on wooden panels, see Robertson 1975, 245.
13. See Page 1981, 274. *Contra*, Kebric 1983, 12–13.
14. For a strenuous effort to explain the absence of a signature on the *Nekyia*, see Kebric 1983, 12–13. It remains puzzling nonetheless. Perhaps the one signature covered both paintings, though the couplet seems too *Ilioupersis*-centric for that. Perhaps the signature on the *Nekyia* was a mundane "Polygnotos painted me" and paled before the "Simonidean" epigram, and was thus easily ignored. But perhaps there was no second signature at all. Whatever the case, Pausanias has no doubts about who painted the *Nekyia*.
15. *Greek Anthology* 9.757 and 758; Page 1981, 245–246, who suggests that the paintings of Kimon and Dionysios decorated the opposite flanges of the same door.
16. *Greek Anthology* 13.17; Page 1981, 245. The last clause simply identifies Iphion as a Corinthian.
17. Page 1981, 246; also Pollitt 1990, 125 and 145.
18. The metrical apportioning of images on the same structure to two different artists has an analogue in a story (Pliny, *NH* 35.154) that the late Archaic Greeks Damophilos and Gorgasos were commissioned to decorate the Temple of Ceres in Rome (dedicated in 493 BCE), and that they wrote a Greek epigram (*versibus inscriptis Graece*) to inform the viewer that the works "on the right" were by Damophilos and those "on the left" were by Gorgasos. Pliny says they were modelers (*plastae*) as well as painters and that they combined those arts on the temple. Their works were, then, possibly painted terracotta reliefs; but see Richardson 1992, 80.
19. Robertson 1975, 242, has, in fact, suggested that the signatory epigram on the *Ilioupersis* at Delphi was a copy of an epigram originally written for Polygnotos' other *Ilioupersis* in Athens (see below). But see Stansbury-O'Donnell 2005, 87 n. 44.
20. Pausanias 1.15.1–4; 5.11.6; Pliny, *NH* 35.57.
21. For recent discussions of the *Battle of Oinoe*, see Boardman 2005, 67–69 (who attributes it to Mikon), and Stansbury-O'Donnell 2005, 74–76, 78–81.
22. For the relevant sources, see Pollitt 1990, 126–145. Stansbury-O'Donnell 2005, 77, suggests that the young Panainos was apprenticed to Mikon on the *Battle of Marathon*; Robertson 1975, 244, that work on the painting was begun by Mikon, put on hold after the ostracism of Kimon in 461, and finished by Panainos; Boardman 2005, 66, that Panainos "is not a contender" for the creator of the work.
23. It is remotely possible that the panel paintings in the Stoa had deteriorated far more by the time of Pliny or Pausanias than the frescoes in the Knidian Lesche had, and that the original signatures, had they existed, were no longer readable (it is worth noting that, according to Pliny *NH* 35.123, a wall painting by Polygnotos at Thespiai needed to be restored just a century or so later by Pausias, so preservation was an issue). On the other hand, many, if not most, of the figures in the various Stoa paintings were undoubtedly labeled and their names could still be read (which is probably how Pausanias could identify such iconographically

unfamiliar heroes as Marathon and Ekhetlos in the *Battle of Marathon* or, very likely, the eponymous nymph in the *Battle of Oinoe*. We are also specifically told (by the 4th-century orator Aeschines, *Against Ktesiphon* 186) that Miltiades was not labeled in the Marathon painting (he must have been recognizable from his actions and his “portrait”), and the implication is that other figures in the painting were; see Krumeich 1996.

24. For Apelles’ writings and those of other 4th-century painters, see Pollitt 1995, 20.
25. Pliny *NH* 35.81–83; the panel was eventually taken to Rome, where it perished in a fire on the Palatine. For a reading that rejects the anecdote as relevant to the issue of artistic individuality or style, see Lenain 2011, 58–60.
26. Pliny, *NH* 35.88. Lenain 2011, 63–64, rightly notes that signatures are not explicitly mentioned in the story, but the simplest way to pass off another’s work as your own is to sign it yourself. At any rate, Pliny confirms that Apelles did sign some of his works; see n. 37 below.
27. On Parrhasios generally, see Pollitt 1990, 158–163; Robertson 1975, 411–413. For the dialogue with Socrates, see Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.10.1–5.
28. For Parrhasios’ and Mys’ collaboration on the Bronze Athena and other works, see Pausanias 1.28.2; for the *Ilioupersis* cup and its probably inauthentic signature, see Athenaios 11.782b and Chapter 9 in this volume.
29. Pliny, *NH* 35. 71–72. According to Athenaios 12.543f–544a, Parrhasios’ painting of Herakles at Lindos was inscribed:

*Exactly as he looked when he visited repeatedly at night  
Parrhasios in his sleep, this is how he looks here.*

Seneca (*Controversiae* 10.5) claims that Parrhasios was also violent: he supposedly bought an old man from among the captives of Olynthus (destroyed by Philip of Macedon) and tortured him (until death) so as to use him as a model for a painting of the tormented Prometheus. The story is not believable. For one thing, the chronology does not fit (Philip II took Olynthus in 348, too late for Parrhasios). The artist may have been arrogant, but he was not a murderer; see also Morales 1996, 188–190.

30. Athenaios 12.543d–e (trans. Pollitt); Pliny *NH* 35.67–72. For the authenticity of these epigrams (often doubted), see Page 1981, 75, 130.

31. Pliny, *NH* 35.61, dates Zeuxis’s *floruit* to 397 BCE; on the rivalry between Parrhasios and Zeuxis, see especially *NH* 35.65.
32. Lucian, *Zeuxis or Antiochos*, 3.
33. A passage in Lucian (*Calumniae Non Temere Crendendum*, 4) hints that the popularity of identifying labels may have declined in the course of the 4th century, perhaps because writing upon the picture plane might have counteracted innovative atmospheric and perspectival effects. When he describes the personification-rich *Calumny by Apelles*, Lucian can only suppose that two figures are Ignorance and Suspicion – he would have been sure if labels had been written beside them – and he needs his guide to tell him that other figures are Treachery and Deception. On the other hand, figures and personifications are labeled on the very atmospheric *Odyssey Landscapes*, a series of mid-1st-century BCE “Roman” wall-paintings discovered on the Esquiline Hill. Since the labels are written in Greek, the paintings are almost certainly derived in some form from Hellenistic originals, as is the cycle of paintings (also full of Greek labels) representing Trojan battles in the House of the Cryptoporticus at Pompeii; see Ling 2001, 107–110, and also Pollitt 1986, 208–209, who argues that at this date and in this cultural context the distinction between “Greek” and “Roman” is a false one, and that any late Hellenistic work of the 1st century BCE is *also* Roman. At all events, the ancient Greek practice of identifying figures by writing their names beside them never died out entirely.
34. Pliny, *NH* 35.63. Plutarch (*Moralia* 346A) attributes the verse to the late 5th-century painter Apollodoros of Athens, famed for his development of chiaroscuro (or *skiagraphia*).
35. For our sources on Zeuxis generally, see Pliny, *NH* 35.61–66; Pollitt 1990, 146–153. Weavers, again, could sign their own names into cloth; see Athenaios 2.48b.
36. Page 1981, 76, 103–104. Pliny (*NH* 35.65) records another contest between the two artists involving a painting of grapes (by Zeuxis) that fooled birds, and a painted linen curtain (by Parrhasios) that fooled Zeuxis; see Morales 1996, 184–188.
37. That Apelles signed his works is confirmed by the preface to the *Natural History* (*Praefatio* 26), where Pliny commends him (as well as the sculptor Polykleitos) for his modesty in signing his works in the imperfect tense, as if they were still works in progress; see Wang 2004,



- 459–460. Pliny, however, quotes Apelles' signature in a Latin translation; *faciebat Apelles*.
38. Pliny, *NH* 35.72.
  39. Pliny *NH* 35.27: "Augustus also had embedded into the wall of the Curia . . . a [painting of] *Nemea*, seated on a lion and carrying a palm branch, next to whom stands an old man with a staff over whose head hangs a picture of a two-horse chariot – a picture on which Nikias wrote that he did it in the encaustic technique" (trans. Pollitt).
  40. *Greek Anthology* 9.792.
  41. For Marcus Plautius, probably a Greek given a Roman name who signed paintings in the temple of Juno at Ardea in the early 2nd century BCE, see [Chapter 2](#) above. In the case of Macedonian tombs such as those at Lefkadia or Vergina, it is perhaps not surprising that there are no signatures: the paintings were, after all, buried beneath the earth, and signing them would have had no point. Imagining such famous Hellenistic paintings as Philoxenos' lost *Battle of Alexander against Darius* (c. 300 BCE) on the basis of later works such as the Alexander Mosaic from Pompeii is an exercise in sheer optimism anyway, but since the mosaic is unsigned, its model probably was as well.
  42. For Pliny's general reliance upon signatures, see Isager [1991](#), 156.
- were inspired by another, perhaps full-length work.
5. Pliny, *NH* 36.184.
  6. For Sosos, the mosaics of Pergamon, and Heraklitos, see Pappalardo and Ciardiello [2012](#), 35–45, 115–119; Dunbabin [1999](#), 26–28; Pollitt [1986](#), 221–222. I am indebted to Kristen Seaman for showing me images of the Aquileia and Uthina mosaics and for the information that Heraklitos' version was heavily restored in the Renaissance.
  7. Cf. the cases of Apollonios and Glykon, who created versions of Polykleitos' *Doryphoros* and Lysippos' *Wearry Herakles* but put their own names to the works; see [Figs. 8, 11, and Pl. III](#), and [Chapter Two](#) above.
  8. Pappalardo and Ciardiello [2012](#), 35; Dunbabin [1999](#), 28–29. The effect anticipates by some sixteen hundred years the fictive *cartellini* favored by such Renaissance painters as Giovanni Bellini; see Goffen [2001](#), 312–314.
  9. For Asklepiades and the mosaics of Delos, see Pappalardo and Ciardiello [2012](#), 121–123; Dunbabin [1999](#), 33, 273. Judging from another pavement in the house decorated with the "Sign of Tanit," the owner may have been Phoenician, too.
  10. Dunbabin [1999](#), 317; Donderer [1989](#), 55 (A4), pl. 4.
  11. Dunbabin [1999](#), 273.
  12. Pappalardo and Ciardiello [2012](#), 171–178; Dunbabin [1999](#), 39, 44–45; Pollitt [1986](#), 227–228.
  13. Vollkommer [2014](#), 130 (Appendix 3) counts nine named Greek mosaicists, all Hellenistic.
  14. See Cohen [1997](#), 1–2, who rightly notes the complexity of the term "Roman" in this context. The inhabitants of Pompeii did not become Roman citizens until after 89 BCE. Also unsigned is the large, fine pebble mosaic of Hermes Psychopompos leading a bearded, wreathed man driving a two-horse chariot that, as I write this, has just come to light in an extraordinary late 4th-century Macedonian tomb at Amphipolis.
  15. Dunbabin [1999](#), 25–26.
- ## CHAPTER 7
1. Westgate [2012](#), 188. For the Pella mosaics generally, see Pappalardo and Ciardiello [2012](#), 99–109. The hunters are sometimes thought to be the young Hephaisteion and (on the right) the flowing- and golden-haired Alexander the Great himself – the Macedonian ideal.
  2. The stones are black, white, red, and yellow, with a few green ones thrown in, basically corresponding to the "four-color palette" used by such 4th-century painters as Zeuxis and Apelles; Pliny *NH* 35.50, 92. See Cohen [1997](#), 168. The background of paintings would in most instances have been white or light.
  3. Dunbabin [1999](#), 271; Donderer [1989](#), 80 (A41) and pl. 26, 1. The mosaic is in the store-room of the Fethiye Djami mosque in the Roman Agora. The signature as preserved reads [...]ON EPO[IEI].
  4. Pappalardo and Ciardiello [2012](#), 112. Dunbabin [1999](#), 24–26; Pollitt [1986](#), 222. The similarity of the two Sophilos mosaics, together with the cropping of the figures, suggests that both
- ## CHAPTER 8
1. Wachter [2001](#), 171 (EUC I); Boardman [1998](#), 53. A dipinto on a fragmentary Attic plaque from Aegina (Athens NM 18772) is nearly as early (c. 700 BCE), and the inscription [...]SONOS EPIST[...] might belong to

- a signature; see Walter-Karydi 2014, 191–192.
2. Wachter 2001, 169 (ITH 2).
3. Wachter 2001, 211 (IOD 4a–c); Lemos 1991, 1 and pl. 4 (no. 35).
4. The signature is ANDRIAS ME EPOIE; an inscription on the other anta (ARKHIDIKAS ĒMI EGO) names the owner: *I am Arkhidikas*. Wachter 2001, 209 (DOI 1); Boardman 1998, 111 and fig. 244 (who dates it to the early 6th century); Jeffery 1990, 470A (dated 650–625).
5. [... ]S ME EPOIESE; Wachter 2001, 201 (DOC 4).
6. Wachter 2001, 171–172 (EUC 3); Jeffery 1990, 88 (no. 22).
7. See Dougherty 2003, 50–51, and Spivey 1997, 56, for the consensus view, which is repeated so frequently that it is often taken as fact; also Izzet 2004, for whom the vase is “a product of Etruscan and Greek interaction.” The vase’s clay, however, has still not been chemically tested, so far as I know, and no other vase from Caere or anywhere else has been attributed to Aristonothos. For Wachter 2001, 29–30 (INC 1), the style of the letters does nothing to pin down the vase’s origins, though the writer/artist may have been Ionian, possibly even Naxian. Boardman 1998, 114, and Jeffery 1990, 239, 241 (no. 24), on the other hand, note that the script could be “colonial Euboean,” and so the vase might have been made at an Euboian outpost in south Italy (Kyme, Pithekoussai) or Sicily; see also Vollkommer 2014, 112. The vase’s findspot, of course, need not have been its place of manufacture.

Pyrros’ aryballos (above, n. 6) is possibly the product of another 7th-century immigrant to the west. Certainly, the emigration of Greek potters to Etruria continues in the 6th and 5th centuries: see above Chapter 2, n. 39.
8. For recent interpretations, see Harari 2014; Neer 2012, 116; and Izzet 2004.
9. Wachter 2001, 207 (IOI 5). The Naxian sherd is dated to the late 7th century by Williams 1995, 139, but c. 640 by Villaneuva Puig 2007, 34, and even earlier, c. 660, by Walter-Karydi 2014, 193. It is not clear whether the Istrokles who signed a fragmentary dinos from Smyrna, dated c. 640, signed as its potter or painter. If the latter, he would be a contemporary of the unnamed Naxian vase-painter; Vollkommer 2014, 112.
10. Wachter 2001, 159–165.
11. Herodotos 2.167. It appears that Spartan citizens were legally prohibited from taking up crafts (at least by the early 4th century); Cartledge 1979, 155.
12. Sparkes 2011, 147, fig. 50; Wachter 2001, 44–45 (COR 17); Boardman 1998, fig. 363. *Polyterpos* is the (appropriate) name of the flute-player who plays for the dancers. Like the names Nebris and Glyka on a Middle Corinthian cup in Athens, the labels identify real-life 6th-century Corinthians (the women on the cup were likely courtesans, or *hetairai*); Wachter 2001, 54–55 (COR 25); Boardman 1998, fig. 394.

The Chest of Kypselos (datable to the late 7th or early 6th century) and its inscriptions are described at length by Pausanias 5.17.5–19.10. The figures applied to it were of ivory and gold, and the inscriptions were sometimes lengthy. For example, the caption for a scene of the Judgment of Paris read: “This is Hermes, showing to Alexandros [Paris] so that he may judge their beauty Hera and Athena and Aphrodite.”
13. Wachter 2001, 156–157 (COP Appendix I); Amyx 1988, 563–564 (Timonidas), 569 (Khares), 591 (Milonidas), 599 (Ekhekles), 604–605 (*Ho Korinthios*), 607 (Perillos). *Ho Korinthios* may, however, have been the dedicatory of the pinax rather than its artist.
14. For the signatures of Timonidas and Milonidas, see Wachter 2001, 55–57 (COR 27), 129–130 (COP 18), and 136 (COP 41); also Hurwit 2015, 74 and figs. 2.6 and 2.7. Wachter reads Timonidas’ signature on the pinax in Berlin (COP 18) as TIMONIDAS EGRAPS’ E[M]BIA (“Timonidas painted these lively figures”).
15. The Chigi Painter may also have been a wall-painter; see Hurwit 2015, 80, and Hurwit 2012. The Chigi vase is a Protocorinthian product, but the labels do not seem to have been written by a Corinthian; Wachter 2001, 31 (PCO 2). So, either the artist (though trained in a quintessentially Protocorinthian style) was not a native Corinthian, or he was a Corinthian, but turned the vase over to someone else for inscription, or he was a Corinthian, but copied the texts after a non-Corinthian source.
16. Wachter 2001, 70–71 (COR 57); Amyx 1988, 255–256.
17. Wachter 2001, 11–12 (BOI 3).
18. Kilinski 1990, 4.

19. The signature on one of Gamedes' vases is painted, the other incised, and the difference in technique might account for the differences in style. Kilinski 1990, 19–20, separates Gamedes the potter from a Gamedes Painter who decorated his two vases.
20. For detailed analyses of the Boiotian vases and signatures discussed here, see Wachter 2001, 9–17 (BOI 1–7); also Osborne and Pappas 2007, 147–150, and Osborne 2010, 238–239.
21. Kilinski 1990, 52, cites a *kalos*-inscription of the mid-6th century (*Polytimidas is handsome – yes, very handsome!*) that is earlier than the earliest Attic examples (for which, see later in this chapter).
22. Boardman 1998, 213–214. At the end of the 6th century TEISIAS EPOIESEN HATHENAIOS (*Teisias the Athenian made [me]*) appears on four minimally decorated Boiotian drinking-cups; see Kilinski 1990, 35 n. 8.
23. Boardman 1998, 214 and fig. 447. *Contra* Kilinski, Boardman believes Gamedes was the painter.
24. Bolmarcich and Muskett (forthcoming) have compiled a database of 1,039 Attic signatures on vases from the early 6th to the mid-4th century, and acknowledge that that number is likely incomplete. The greatest concentration of signed vases is found c. 550–475. That is, the signing of vases is primarily an Archaic phenomenon.
25. Sparkes 1991, 111. Signed vases are known in 4th-century South Italian Red-Figure, but the evidence is extremely limited: we have well over twenty thousand such vases, but only two vase-painters – Asteas and Python, from Paestum – are known to have signed any of them. South Italian Red-Figure is otherwise notable for its large number of texts – mostly identifying labels but sometimes metrical quotations from plays or even terse conversations (on a late Apulian barrel krater in Basel, for example, Hermes grasps the wrist of a young man and says “Off to Hades,” and the youth responds “I won’t go”); see Trendall 1989, 13–14, 101–102, 198–203; and figs. 105 and 269. In any case, the impulse to write on South Italian vases did not entail signing them.
26. Von Bothmer 1985, 33. Cf. Viviers 2006, 147, who counts 440 Attic Black Figure vases signed *epoiesen* but only 27 *egraphsen* signatures.
27. On the dinos fragment from Pharsalos (Athens 15499; Fig. 37), Sophilos wrote the name AKHIL[L]ES (retrograde) to the right of a grandstand filled with Akhaians, the retrograde (and misspelled) caption PATROKLUS ATLA obliquely to the left of the grandstand, SOPHILOS MEGRAPHSEN (retrograde) next to that, and at the edge of the sherd, above the backs of racing chariot-teams, the partial retrograde inscription SO[...]. Like others (including Beazley and von Bothmer), I take this to be the start of a potter’s signature SO[PHILOS MEPOIESEN]; Immerwahr 1990, 21 (no. 62) does not, reading [... ]IOS instead. But we know that Sophilos was a potter as well as a painter, signing [SOPH]ILOS MEPOIESEN at least once, on a fragmentary krater in Athens; Immerwahr 1990, 21 (no. 63–64). If a solitary *epoiesen* can on occasion mean both “made and painted,” what does it mean when only an *egraphsen* inscription appears, as on another, more complete dinos by Sophilos in London (Boardman 1991, fig. 24; Immerwahr 1990, 21, no. 65)? That is, when Sophilos proudly signed that dinos as painter, was it assumed he also potted it?  
For the Nearchos fragment see Boardman 1991, 35, and fig. 49. Though literate, Nearchos was also one of the earliest Attic vase-painters to write nonsense: on his signed aryballos in New York perfectly good words and names are accompanied by brief inscriptions – BRE, RORU, and AKI, for example – that mean nothing; see Immerwahr 1990, 27. If Archaic Greeks invariably read out loud when they read, did they voice such meaningless syllables, too? Mayor et al. 2014, argue that apparent “nonsense” on some Attic vases (especially those depicting Amazons and Skythians) may in fact attempt to record words in foreign languages (such as ancient Iranian).
28. For Kleitias’ signatures generally (five vases or fragments bear his name), see Hirayama 2010, 13–19. Seventeen more vases are attributed to him on stylistic grounds.  
In the *Wedding of Peleus and Thetis* frieze on the François vase, where assorted divinities are shown processing on foot or in chariots toward the home of the bride and groom, Kleitias cunningly wrote the labels *Poseidon* and *Amphitrite*, but did not actually depict Poseidon and Amphitrite because the handle of the vase prevented it: it is as if he expected the viewer to

imagine that the procession continued behind the handle, and to believe that the divine couple was simply hidden from view. See Whitley 2012, 589; Beazley 1986, 27.

29. Boardman 1975, 32 and fig. 22. Euphronios painted and signed vases for a second potter, too (Kakhrylion). On the other hand, Euphronios gave up painting for potting c. 500 BCE (potting was evidently where the money was), and on a cup in the Louvre (G 105) the vase-painter Onesimos not only signed for himself (ONESIMOS EGRAPHIS[EN]) but also signed for Euphronios (EU[PH]RONIOS EPOIESEN); Immerwahr 1990, 85 (no. 507). That is, Euphronios, who early in his career wrote proxies for others, later had proxies written for him.
30. Cf. Immerwahr 1990, 171.
31. The possibility that Amasis the potter and the Amasis Painter were one and the same is now often doubted; see von Bothmer 1985, 38, and Immerwahr 1990, 38 and n. 18. But the identity of potter and painter is maintained by Boardman 1991, 54, and 2001, 151. It is a close call, but until conclusive evidence appears it is prudent to keep them separate.
32. We have the names of Attic 97 potters – more than twice as many – though some names appear on both lists. For these statistics see Boardman 2001, 128, and Osborne 2010, 244. Vollkommer 2014, 126–127 (Appendix 1), tabulates the actual signatures of 109 Greek potters, 34 vase-painters, and 11 who were both vase-painters and potters, but his numbers include non-Attic artisans.
33. Depending on whom one counts (and who does the counting), the number is not far from the number of all Greek gem-cutters who signed their stones (which are far less numerous than vases); cf. Chapter 3, ns. 4 and 5.
34. For Exekias' vases generally, see Mackay 2010. For Taranto 179196 (Mackay's Catalogue No. 12), see esp. 135–143 and pls. 33–34. For repetition on Exekias's vases, see Steiner 2007, 18–32.
35. Perhaps the first Athenian *kalos*-inscriptions, praising a youth named Stesias, appear on so-called Group E amphoras (dated c. 550–540 BCE) that Exekias appears to have made but not painted; see Immerwahr 1990, 31 (no. 127), but see also n. 77 below for a variant that might be as early. The practice of praising the beauty of Athenian youths on pots will remain common until the early 5th century. But, again, a

Boiotian *kalos*-inscription is even earlier than the first Attic examples, dating c. 575–550; see Kilinski 1990, 52.

36. Hurwit 1985, 261.
37. Berlin 1720; Immerwahr 1990, 32 (no. 132). The Berlin vase is signed only once, with a slightly different spelling: EKHSEKIAS EGRAPHSE KAPOESE EME. Immerwahr believes Exekias' sense of design and his desire to have the signature occupy exactly half the circumference of the rim required the spelling he used. An even earlier metrical signature appears around the mouth of a neck-amphora in Eleusis (Arch. Museum 280, once 4267; *ABFV* 85):  
  
KLEIMAKHOSMEPOIESEKEMIKENO  
*Kleimakhos made me and I am his.*
38. Mackay 2010, 354–357, suggests the North Slope krater (Agora AP 1044) may instead be the work of the Mastos Painter. The lettering on the krater is indeed noticeably different from that on other vases that we confidently believe Exekias painted as well as made. But Immerwahr 1990, 34–35, notes a general inconsistency in the style of Exekias' lettering and suggests simply that his handwriting changed over the course of his relatively brief career (placed by some between 545 and 530).
39. Beazley 1986, 58. Mackay 2010 excludes the Group E vases from her catalogue.
40. See Lenain 2011, 50–73. See also Osborne 2010, 248 n. 35, who notes that “signatures” naming Douris are found on cups that he clearly did not paint. In one instance Douris himself signed a cup made and painted by others. Much later, Phaedrus (*Fabulae* 5, prologue 4–7) notes how artists of his day (late 1st-century BCE) get better prices for their works by signing their sculptures “Praxiteles,” their silverware “Mys,” and their paintings “Zeuxis;” see Stewart 1990, 230, and Ridgway 1997, 296. The practice that Phaedrus describes is certainly fraud, but true forgery entails the attempt to mimic the style of another artist, not just applying a false label.
41. For the cups in general, see Mackay 2010, 4–5 and notes 30 and 31; Steiner 2007, 18 (on Athens 1104); Mommsen 1998, 46–49; Immerwahr 1990, 35–36 (nos. 146–150).
42. There are other Exekian vases with *epoiesen* signatures on both sides – a neck-amphora in London (British Museum B 210), for example,

with the battle of Achilles and Penthesilea on one side and a scene of Dionysos and Oinopion on the other; Immerwahr 1990, 33 (no. 133). So in this case, at least, neither side was necessarily meant to receive more attention than the other.

43. See Mackay 2010, 334 (citing Stähler 1968–1971). The harmony is not as striking on Berlin F 1720, where Exekias also signs as potter and painter around the rim; Boardman 1991, fig. 97. But the pyramidal composition of a powerfully striding Herakles wrestling with the Nemean Lion does reflect vase structure: the oblique line of Herakles' body and withdrawn right leg seems to continue the descending line of the handle on the right. The lion's form should intimate the line of the handle on the left, but Herakles has pushed the beast off-center and thus off-line (as it were).
44. For the client's role in signing, see Viviers 2006.
45. Villa Giulia 50599. Mackay 2010, 215–219 (no. 19); Immerwahr 1990, 34–35 (no. 142), is unsure whether the inscriptions were incised before or after firing, but notes that some letters are like those on the North Slope krater, which may thus belong to Exekias after all (cf. n. 38 above).
46. The assumption is that Kharopos was a man; Robertson 1991, 7–8. But Mackay 2010, 215 (n. 4) points out that in Boiotia *Kharopos* was an epithet of Herakles and the name of a local deity, and so the inscription might record a dedication to a god rather than a gift to a friend or lover. Why a Sikyonian like Epainetos should dedicate a vase to a Boiotian god or hero is unclear.
47. Exekias also made and painted pinakes with somber, dignified scenes of mourning and funerary processions. There are labels, but no signatures, on these plaques. See Mommsen 1997, and Beazley 1986, 65–66.
48. Hurwit 1985, 271–272.
49. Osborne 2010, 244.
50. For Kleimakhos' signed neck-amphora, see above n. 37. For Makron's case, see Hemelrijk 1991, 253; Immerwahr 1990, 89–90 (nos. 560, 561). Another possible signature appears on a pyxis in Athens (Acropolis 560) with the letters MAKR. . . .
51. Cf. Osborne 2010, 244; Viviers 2006, 143–144 (1 and 2). Nikosthenes seems to be a special case: the large number of NIKOS-THENESEPOIESEN inscriptions that survive (c. 150) indicates that signing was the norm for him, not the exception; see below. It may also have been normal for Tleson, whose signature survives c. 90 times [cf. Fig. 47]. See Tosto 1999, 1 and n. 2.
52. There are a few instances in which inscriptions might have been written by someone other than the vase-painter, but these are exceptions that prove the rule. Five vases with the supposed signature of the painter Sakonides were evidently inscribed by different hands, and so "Sakonides did not write the inscriptions on all his vases himself;" see Immerwahr 1990, 52 and 171–172. So, too, different letterers wrote on opposite sides of at least one Leagros Group amphora painted by a single artist; Immerwahr 1990, 75 (no. 441) and 171.
53. Brussels A 718: Beazley *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 445 (n. 256); Athens 15375: Beazley *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 447 (n. 274).
54. Tosto 1999, 5; Boardman 2001, 129; Immerwahr 1990, 61–62, 172; Beazley 1986, 67; Immerwahr 1984. If Nikosthenes in fact painted the majority of his own products, he would be identical to the Black Figure artist called Painter N, who at his best is merely competent. Nikosthenes' chief apprentice was Pamphaios, who apparently set up a shop of his own c. 530 BCE and whose staff painters included the fine Red Figure artists Oltos and Epiktetos (both of whom had trouble spelling Pamphaios' name, rendering it PHANPHANOS or PAMAPHIOS).
55. Berlin F 1801 (now lost). See Tosto 1999, 181, 186–187, 230–231 (no. 158). A similar case is a cup in Munich by Arkhikles and Glaukytes. Narrow bands with the Calydonian Boar-Hunt and Theseus fighting the Minotaur are jam-packed with small figures and labels, and there are the two signatures (one under each handle) GLAUKYTES MEPOIESEN and ARKHIKLES EPOIESEN; see Immerwahr 1990, 49 (no. 233); Boardman 1991, fig. 116. It is again not clear how the two could have divvied up the potting of a cup (even a large one like this one), so perhaps EPOIESEN is here used in an inclusive but indistinct sense: Arkhikles and Glaukytes made and painted the vase together. On the other hand, there are cases where two painters worked on the same vase – one painting the exterior of a cup, for example, the other painting the interior; see Hemelrijk 1991, 254.
56. Louvre G 103; Immerwahr 1990, 63 (no. 357). An earlier example is Sophilos, who signs his

- dinos in London only as painter; see above, n. 27.
57. Munich 2307; Immerwahr 1990, 65 (no. 369). New York 1981.11.9; Immerwahr 1990, 72, n. 41. Euthymides may also have painted vases made by Sosias, a potter whom he seems to address through inscriptions on at least one vase; Immerwahr 1990, 66 (no. 376).
  58. Neils (forthcoming); Boardman 2001, 148; 1975, 36 and figs. 52 and 53.
  59. Osborne 2010, 243: “writing . . . attracts writing.”
  60. St. Petersburg 615. For the full conversation, see the Preface; also Immerwahr 1990, 70 (no. 415); Sparkes 2011, 148; and, for this and other examples of “chatting” on Attic vases, Walter-Karydi 2014. For a later South Italian conversation, see above n. 25. On the other side of the vase in St. Petersburg, incidentally, there are wrestlers, and Leagros is once again praised as a *país kalos*.
  61. Wachter 2001, 173–186.
  62. The only other words written on all of Nikos-thenes’ vases belong to a damaged *kalos*-inscription on a vase in the Louvre (F 116); Tosto 1999, 173, 227 (no. 138).
  63. For the Gordion cup of Kleitias and Ergotimos (there are leaping dolphins in a tondo inside), see Beazley 1986, 48 and pl. 44, 1–3; for Tleson’s cups (most probably made and painted by him), see Beazley 1986, 50–51, and Boardman 1991, 60.
  64. Exekias: Mackay 2010, 135–143, pls. 33–34; Amasis: von Bothmer 1985, 125–129 (no. 23); Epiktetos: Boardman 1975, figs. 77–78; Douris: Boardman 1975, fig. 292, and Immerwahr 1990, 87 (no. 536), and fig. 116. For the aesthetics of writing on Greek vases, see Osborne and Pappas 2007; Hurwit 1990, 190–193.
  65. Osborne 2010, 243.
  66. Williams 1995, 141; Vickers and Gill 1994, 156–157. *Ekerameusen* appears on no other vase.
  67. Cf. Viviers 2006, 144 (3).
  68. Aristophanes, *Peace* 679–681, 688–692; *Clouds* 1065–1066; *Knights* 1304 (Hyperbolos); *Ekklesiastizousai* 248–253 (Kephalos); Diodoros Siculus 20.63.4 (Agathokles).
  69. de Callatay 2012, 242.
  70. *The Kiln*: Pseudo-Herodotus, *Life of Homer*, 32 (for a translation, see Lefkowitz 1981, 152); Pindar, *Nemean* 10.33–35; *Fragment* 124 (Snell), on Athenian cups; see also Bell 1995, 27; Athenaios I.28b–c (Kritias’ catalogue); Plato, *Hippias Major* 288c–289a. See also Sparkes 2011, 102; Boardman 2001, 144; and Williams 1995, 159–160.
  71. Immerwahr 1990, 30–31; Beazley 1986, 38. To be fair, there are plenty of misspellings on Attic vases made and painted by natives.
  72. Conversely, we know of some Athenian potters or painters who moved elsewhere: “Teisias the Athenian,” again, signs Boiotian vases, and the Suessela Painter may have worked in Corinth; see Boardman 1998, 214 and fig. 440, and Sparkes 1991, 114.
  73. On a plate in London (Fig. 48), Epiktetos inverts the *sigma* and the *phi* of the verb, spelling EGRASPHEIN instead of EGRAPHSEN. He does this 13 other times; Immerwahr 1990, 62. For Lydos the slave, see Boardman 2001, 144.
  74. Smikros’ self-portrait on the Brussels stamnos is the earliest surviving self-portrait in Western art, but it was not the first, if we can believe Pliny: Theodoros, the great Samian architect, also made a bronze portrait of himself that was “famed as a marvelous likeness” and celebrated for the subtlety of its workmanship (*NH* 34.83). A beardless Smikros appears again (this time sharing a banquet couch with a bearded, singing symposiast labeled Ekphantides) on a krater painted by Euphronios (Munich 8935); Neer 2012, 111–112, and figs. 53 and 54. The implication is that the young Smikros was the *erastes*, or beloved, of the adult *eromenos* (lover) Ekphantides, in the kind of pederastic relationship that was virtually institutionalized among the élite in Athens in the late Archaic and Early Classical periods. SMIKROS KALOS itself appears on a hydria attributed to Euphronios in Berlin (1966.20); see Neer 2012, 118, 134 (12).
  75. Euphronios solicits Leagros: Getty 82.AE.53. Neer 2012, 100, accepts the attribution of the psykter to Smikros; Boardman 2001, 149 and fig. 179, is unsure; Robertson 1992, 26, is doubtful.
  76. Munich 2620; Boardman 1975, fig. 26.
  77. Moore 2001, 21–23. The early inscription does not follow the usual pattern (as in *Leagros kalos*) but reads ANDOKIDESKA[L]-OSDOKEITIMA[G]ORA (*Andokides seems beautiful to Timagoras*).
  78. Munich 2421; Boardman 1975, fig. 38.
  79. See Neer 2002, 87–134; Robertson 1992, 26. Neer argues that such fictions were no longer needed once Athens and its democracy



settled down in the 480s and the élite no longer needed to emphasize its progressive “sociability.” It is possible, too, that such self-conscious scenes were painted on vases intended for the Etruscan market: the Attic vase-painter would have been free to insert himself or his colleagues into an aristocratic milieu, since the Etruscan buyer would have been unaware of or indifferent to the conceit. At all events, these scenes represent precisely the kind of violation of social norms and boundaries that Plato would later find absurd in his ideal Republic; see here [Chapter One](#), n. 13.

80. For these dedications, see Keesling [2003](#), 56–59 (on the problematic dedication of Nearkhos); Moore [2001](#), 22 (Andokides and Mnesiades); Raubitschek [1949](#), 255–258 (no. 225, Euphronios); Keesling [2003](#), 73, and Vollkommer [2004](#), 160–165, s.v. Onesimos (V. M. Strocka).
81. See Neils (forthcoming).
82. Kreuzer [2009](#); Williams [1997](#).
83. The alternative is that the inscription should not to be taken as the continuation of the signature on the opposite side of the vase (“Euthymides painted this as Euphronios never could”) but means something like “Euphronios never acted like this” – that is, Euphronios (whose name, again, happens to mean “Good Sense”) never drunkenly stumbled down the streets of Athens; see, for example, Vickers and Gill [1994](#), 98. Neer [2002](#), 227 (n. 74) rejects that alternative and, like him, Neils (forthcoming) believes the phrase is most likely a taunt claiming superior draftsmanship: “Euphronios never drew anything like this.”
84. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 25–26: “potter is angry with potter, craftsman with craftsman, beggar envies beggar, and bard envies bard.”
85. *SEG* 52 204 (c. 330 BCE).
86. Robertson [1992](#), 292–295; Sparkes [1991](#), 67–68; Beazley [1986](#), 89–90; and Burford [1972](#), 209.

## CHAPTER 9

1. Hurwit [2006](#), 124; Padgett [2003](#), 194–196 and n. 6; for Aristodamos’ signature in Olympia, see Siewert and Taeuber [2013](#), 155–157 (no. 112). There is the Lindian Chronicle a reference to a metal krater dedicated by Phalaris, tyrant of Akragas in Sicily, but inscribed with *Daidalos gave me as a gift of guest-friendship to*

*Kokalos*. Daidalos was, of course, the quintessential artist: any vase he gave he would also have made. But he is also mythical (so is Kokalos, a legendary king of Akragas), and the inscription is obviously not authentic; see Gaunt [2013](#), 47–49.

2. Sowder [2009](#), 330, 353–385; Jeffery [1990](#), 164, pl. 29 (no. 26); Cook [1987](#), 56 and fig. 53.
3. MFA 21.1843. See Siewert and Taeuber [2013](#), 217–218 (no. 201); Kyrieleis [2011](#), 67 (fig. 55).
4. Jeffery [1990](#), 231, pl. 45 (no. 5).
5. *SEG* 50–93 (*IG*<sup>3</sup> 1472); 50–464; British Museum GR 1823.6–10.1: Cook [1987](#), 55 and fig. 52, and Kyrieleis [2011](#), 86–87 and fig. 90.
6. Barr-Sharrar [2008](#), 43–44, who dates the vase to c. 370 BCE.
7. For the staff and phiale, see Lyons [2013](#), 24, fig. 10, and 44–46, figs. 24, 24a.
8. See Sideris [2002](#) for these and other dedications inscribed in metal.
9. Vollkommer [2014](#), 128 (Appendix 2) and 130 (Appendix 3), tabulates four Archaic metalworkers known by name, two Classical ones, and 10 Hellenistic ones, for a total of 16. There are, in contrast, more than 10 times as many Roman Imperial metalworkers known (198).

I discount here the provocative but unconvincing theory that Attic Black Figure and Red Figure vases (with their color schemes in red-orange, lustrous black, purple-red, and white) are really just cheap knock-offs of metal vases in gold or bronze, tarnished silver, copper, and ivory, and that even the signatures on painted pots replicate signatures inlaid upon the (virtually nonexistent) metal originals; the full presentation of the theory is found in Vickers and Gill [1994](#). According to the theory, *egraphsen* means “designed” and *epoiesen* means “fabricated in metal,” and so “Exekias” (for example) is not the name of a potter and vase-painter, but the name of a metalsmith whose work a lowly, unknown ceramicist merely copied. For two of many critiques, see Boardman [1987](#), and Robertson [1992](#), 4–5.

10. Athenaios 11.782b; here [Chapter 6](#), n. 28. Jex-Blake and Sellers [1967](#), 3–4, declare the signature a forgery since the formula *tekhna Myos* (“work by Mys”) is not found before the Roman Imperial period. Indeed, Mys’ name appears to have been forged on a number of silver vessels that became the object of scandal in the early Empire; see Perry [1995](#). Roman authors claim that the Classical

sculptors Myron, Praxiteles, Skopas, and Pheidias were also silversmiths or jewelers (cf. Martial, *Epigrams* 4.39), but the claims are relatively late and unreliable; Ridgway 1997, 314 n. 22.

11. Pausanias 1.28.2.
12. See Hurwit 1999, 60 and n. 144; Vollkommer 2001, 161, s.v. Deinokrates (R. Vollkommer), and 2004, 473, s.v. Timodemos (R. Vollkommer).
13. *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1471, lines 10–15. Harris 1995, 171–172 (320).
14. See Harris 1995, 153–155, 158–159, 160–161, 168, 171–172, 211; also Hamilton 2000, 442, 445, 447, 451, 452.
15. André-Salvini and Descamps-Lequime 2005.
16. Jeffery 1990, 113 (no. 22), dated “500–475?”
17. Marazov 1996, 263, fig. 159.
18. Harris 1995, 161–162 (no. 260); only the weights of the hydriai are noted.
19. *Greek Anthology* 16.248; see also Pliny, *NH* 33.156, and Pollitt 1990, 234 n. 19.
20. Pliny, *NH* 33.154–157; 34.84. For the signed herm and other signatures of Boethos, see Marcadé 1957, no. 28; Pollitt 1986, 140–141; Stewart 1990, 305–306; and Ridgway 2002, pl. 94.
21. For an attribution of the Vix krater to the multitalented Gitiadas of Sparta (cf. Pausanias 3.17.1–3), see Stibbe 2006. But its place of manufacture is very much debated, and other possibilities range from south Italy to Aegina to Ionia.

## CHAPTER 10

1. For the Kleiokrateia base (Agora I 4165), see Geagan 2011, 173–174 (H320); Ajootian 2007, 20–25; Pasquier and Martinez 2007, 41, 48–49 (Cat. No. 1, dated 360–350); and Corso 2004, 229–232, who believes the statues were of marble and that . . . ysikles may have been a member of Praxiteles’ workshop. We, in fact, know of a sculptor named Lysikles (see Geagan 2011, 277 n. 452; Vollkommer 2004, 27, s.v. Lysikles [R. Vollkommer]; Stewart 1990, 23), but he seems to be later than the one mentioned on the base, working c. 300 BCE. The letters of . . . ysikles’ signature are also 0.9 centimeters high, as is Praxiteles’s signature on the more recently discovered Khairippe base (though it is found some 30 empty centimeters below the dedication). For the Khairippe base (3rd Ephoreia, L 6866, also datable c. 360), see Ajootian 2007, 25, and for all three of Praxiteles’ signed works from Athens, see Tracy 2008. It was Praxiteles’ father (?) Kephisodotos, C. Keesling kindly informs me, who evidently began the practice of “one-centimeter signatures.”
2. The early date of 375 for the beginning of Praxiteles’ career partly depends upon the date of the Acanthus column at Delphi and the reading (by two scholars, C. Vatin and A. Corso) of Praxiteles’ signature on its base. The signature has proven difficult for other scholars to see, and so Praxiteles’ association with the monument (which is more likely to date c. 330 in any case) is doubtful; see Pasquier and Martinez 2007, 85–86.
3. Tanner 2006, 153–155, argues that Praxiteles’ minuscule signature on the Kleiokrateia base, as well as some other signatures, in fact “indicate the relative marginality of the artist in the communicative process involved in setting up a work of art.” If he means that the dedicator/patron, rather than the sculptor, usually controlled what was written on the base, there is no argument. But if he means that the sculptor had little or no input, and that sculptors’ signatures are generally signs of their own minimal status, then, as we shall see, he is contradicted by the more strongly cut and central signature on Praxiteles’ own Arkhippe base and by many Archaic and Classical signatures that are virtually the same size as, or even larger than, the dedicatory text.
4. Cf. Osborne 2010, 247.
5. For the Arkhippe base (Agora I 4568), see Geagan 2011, 175–176 (H325); Tracy 2008 (dated 350–325); Ajootian 2007, 19–20 (dated c. 334–314); and Pasquier and Martinez 2007, 41, 50–51 (Cat. No. 2, dated 350–330).
6. Stewart 1990, 23.
7. According to Tracy 2008, at least two and probably all three of the Athenian bases signed by Praxiteles were inscribed by the same letterer, who, he believes, was probably an assistant in the sculptor’s atelier. But the letterer of the Arkhippe base (Agora I 4568, Fig. 54) has also been associated with over two dozen decrees and record reliefs inscribed by Tracy’s “Cutter of EM 12807,” and if the association holds he worked for clients both public and private; Ajootian 2007, 19–20. That is, he may have been regularly employed by Praxiteles, but his activity extended beyond a single sculptor’s shop.

7. CEG 326. The Mantiklos Apollo is generally dated c. 700–675; Boardman 1991b, fig. 10. For a perceptive discussion of the bronze and its reception, see Day 2010, 33–48; also Friedländer 1987, 38 (no. 35).
8. CEG 403; Bowie 2010, 339–340; Day 2010, 190–193; Boardman 1991b, fig. 71; Hurwit 1985, 186–191.
9. CEG 27; Kaltsas 2002, 58 (no. 69); Kissas 2000, 54–55 (A 20); Boardman 1991b, fig. 107. The statue stood on a three-stepped base, of which only the middle step (the one engraved with the epitaph) survives.
10. Athens 3938, dated c. 500 BCE. Kaltsas 2002, 66 (no. 94).
11. Athens 4889. Kaltsas 2002, 48–49 (no. 45); Kissas 2000, 47 (A 14). The epitaph on the front (CEG 24) is the first known Attic *stikhēdon* inscription; Jeffery 1990, 73.
12. Aristion signed the Antilokhos monument (Epigraphical Museum 10647–9; c. 530 BCE) retrograde on its right side (as we face the epitaph); see Viviers 2006, 146 and pl. II.3; Kissas 2000, 51 (A 18). For the Xenophantos base (EM 10642), where only the letters [P]ARIOS are preserved, written on the left side of the stone, see Kissas 2000, 51–52 (A 19); Viviers 1992, 128.
13. It seems to have been common practice to inscribe a dedication or epitaph on one block of a stepped base and a signature on another. The Anavyssos kouros has been optimistically attributed to such prominent sculptors as Aristion of Paros, Phaidimos, or Aristokles; see Viviers 1992, 196 and n. 144.
14. For a reinterpretation of the text on the base of the charioteer, see Adornato 2008.
15. Vollkommer 2014, 128, Appendix 2.
16. Ridgway 1993, 421, 431. Some sculptors are represented more than once in this tally. Aristokles, for example, is known from at least five, and possibly eight, signatures [cf. Figs. 63, 76]; Ridgway 1993, 428; Viviers 1992, 115–147.
17. Raubitschek 1949 is still the indispensable work on the subject, supplemented by Keesling 2003.
18. Keesling 2003b, 41–42, cites different numbers – by her count, 67 out of 330 statue bases from the 6th- and 5th-century Acropolis preserve sculptors' signatures whole or in part – but the percentage (20 percent) is nearly identical.
19. Despinis and Kaltsas 2014, 15–17 (no. 5), and figs. 22–26.
20. Ridgway 1993, 430–431. The sculptors include Akousilos (several of whose signatures survive) and Theokydes.
21. Ridgway 1993, 431. The literary sources supply the names of other Samian sculptors (Rhoikos, Theodoros, Telekles), but none of their signatures survive. Pythagoras of Samos (evidently the same sculptor known in our sources as Pythagoras of Rhegion – he emigrated from east to west) is represented by a signature at Olympia; Boardman 1991c, 79, and n. 57 here.
22. Geagan 2011, 272–284.
23. Dillon and Baltes 2013, 232–236, who agree with Viviers 2006 (esp. 150–154) that when dealing with signatures we should focus on the client rather than the artist, that the inclusion of a signature gave additional prestige to the object signed, and that it was the client who benefitted most from that added prestige. We may still wonder, then, why only a minority of clients who commissioned portraits to display along the Delian dromos (13 out of 33) sought the additional prestige of a signature, while the majority did not.
24. Ridgway 1995, 184–185. The inscribed Kyniskos base at Olympia probably supported a bronze by Polykleitos, as noted by Pausanias (6.4.11), but the text does not include a signature. That Polykleitos did sign at least some of his works is to be inferred from Pliny's preface to his *Natural History* (*Praefatio* 26), which commends him and the painter Apelles for using the imperfect tense in their signatures.
25. An epigram in the *Greek Anthology* (16.192) reads *O Stranger, do not think you look upon a common Herm: I am the work (tekhnē) of Skopas*. But the "signature" does not conform to the normal *epoiese* formula, and (like the signature *tekhnē Muos* on the Ilioupersis cup supposedly designed by Parrhasios; see here Chapter 9, n. 10) is suspect. In any case, there were several sculptors named Skopas; see Stewart 2013, 21, and Ridgway 1997, 251–252.
26. On Euphranor and Sostratos, see Pollitt 1990, 8, 93, 233, and Ridgway 1997, 239.
27. See Day 2010, 69–72.
28. Cf. Pausanias 5.17.3, who notes very ancient statues of Leto, Fortune, Dionysos, and a winged Nike in the Temple of Hera at Olympia but cannot name the sculptors.
29. As Keesling 2003, 27–28, points out, "only twice on the Acropolis does Pausanias explicitly refer to the inscription on a statue base as

- the source of his information.” Still, Keesling rightly concludes that Pausanias read inscriptions there and elsewhere “as a matter of course.” The same reliance upon signatures may be found in Pliny, whose “basis for identifying works of art seems to have been signatures on the sculptures themselves. He never refers to artistic style or special characteristics” (Isager 1991, 156). Without a signature to help him, for example, Pliny will not even hazard a guess as to who made a statue of Venus in Vespasian’s Temple of Peace that was “worthy of the old masters;” *NH* 36.27.
30. Pausanias 5.23.1–3.
  31. Pausanias 5.25.7; Siewert and Tauber 2013, 96–97 (no. 42). The inscription on the base simply says NIKODAMOS EPOIESE. Pausanias knew the artist was from Mainalos from inscriptions on other bases in the sanctuary (see 5.26.6).
  32. Pausanias 5.25.8–10; a ninth hero, Odysseus, had already been taken to Rome by Nero. For another signature of Onatas paired with a lengthy dedication at Olympia, see 8.42.8–10.
  33. Pausanias 9.30.1.
  34. Donderer 1996, 87, figs. 1, 2; Jeffery 1990, 92, 94 (n. 4). [...] Jotos was the sculptor but not the dedicant of the kore (his name ended in ... kon), and so differs from his rough contemporary Euthykartides. For Nasstiades’ kouros (Delos A 2464), see here Chapter 1, n. 5.
  35. Donderer 1996, 87–90, figs. 3–4 (Eudemos); 90, figs. 4–5 (Geneleos). Also Ridgway 1993, 431.
  36. For Onatas’ signature, see above and Pausanias 5.25.8; for Boethos’ signed herm and the Eros that probably went with it, see Stewart 1990, 305–306 and figs. 847–848; for Apollonios’ signature, see Ridgway 2002, 83–84. The Sperlonga statues are probably adaptations or “translations” of Hellenistic Baroque prototypes, made late in the 1st century BCE (c. 30) or early in the 1st century CE by the Rhodians specifically for the sea-cave in which they were found; see above Chapter 2 and n. 56; Squire 2012, 611–617; Pollitt 1986, 124–125.
  37. I am aware of only two Attic examples of inscriptions carved directly upon an Archaic statue rather than its base: they are dedications found on the thighs of very fragmentary mid-6th-century kouros found in a deep pit near the Temple of Athena at Sounion (Athens, National Museum 3449 and 3450); see Ridgway 1993, 69; Jeffery 1990, 73–74 and 78 (no. 27); and *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 1024.
  38. Kaltsas 2002, 71–72 (no. 102); Jeffery 1990, 93, 95 (n. 13).
  39. Boardman 1991, figs. 87, 91–93, 96. For Kheramyas’s korai and their texts, see also Karakasi 2003, 26–27.
  40. Pausanias 5.25.9; 5.27.2. The situation is the reverse of Onatas’ Akhaian Monument, where the dedication was on the base and the signature on the statue of Idomeneus.
  41. Leobios (EM 6231): Raubitschek 1949, 95–96 (no. 88); Lysippos (Corinth I 29): Ridgway 1997, 287–288; Moreno 1995, 58 (no. 4.5.1).
  42. For the Aristion and Alxenor stelai, see Kaltsas 2002, 70 (no. 100) and 78 (no. 124), and Friedländer 1987, 62 (no. 57), citing *Iliad* 23.469, and 150–151 (no. 164); for the Mnasisitheios stele (Thebes, Archaeological Museum 28200), see Andreiomenou 2000 and 2006 (Philourgos is the same sculptor as Philergos); for the Potter’s relief, see Boardman 1991, fig. 137.
  43. Boardman 1991, figs. 70–71; Jeffery 1990, 154–156, 168 (no. 4).
  44. Siewert and Tauber 2013, 87–88; Kyrieleis 2011, 101, fig. 106.
  45. The part of the plinth with the signature has disappeared; see Ridgway 2000, 168; Pasquier 1985, 40–41.
  46. EM 6249. Kissas 2000, 236 (B 194); Viviers 1992, 77–84; Goodlett 1989, 46–48; Raubitschek 1949, 12–13 (no. 7).
  47. Acropolis 6506. Kissas 2000, 228 (B 177); Viviers 1992, 45–47; Raubitschek 1949, 15–16 (no. 10).
  48. Acropolis 6963. Hurwit 1999, 149–150; Viviers 1992, 47–49; Raubitschek 1949, 26–28 (no. 22). Euenor’s fragmentary signature (*Euenor ep[oi]ese[n]*) appears alone on another columnar base (Raubitschek 1949, 28 [no. 23]), but a dedication must have appeared elsewhere on the monument. His signature appears again in the flute to the right of Kiron’s dedication on another columnar base (Raubitschek 1949, 20–21 [no. 14]); it is likely that Euenor carved the entire text, dedication and signature alike.
  49. Ridgway 1995, 184–185 and fig. 10.5 (B, C).
  50. The list also includes such sculptors as Gorgias, Diopieithes, and the team of Kritios and Nesiotes; Keesling 2003b, 43; Raubitschek 1949, 436. For the Onatas–Timarkhos base

- (Athens, EM 6263), see Kissas 2000, 161–162 (A 99).
51. Cf. Day 2010, 50.
  52. New York 16.174.6. CEG 14; Kissas 2000, 43 (A 9); Richter 1961, 156 (no. 34).
  53. Athens NM 81. CEG 18; Kaltsas 2002, 58 (no. 66); Kissas 2000, 46–47 (A 13); Jeffery 1990, 73; Richter 1961, 157 (fig. 200). The last two letters of *ergasato* are actually written retrograde at the beginning of a very short fourth line – a minor *boustrophēdon*. The iambic inscription on a third base with Phaidimos’ signature (Jeffery 1990, 74, 78 [no. 31], Richter 1961, 157–158 [no. 35]; Friedländer 1987, 157 [no. 169]) is poorly cut, but the signature is also part of a continuous text, beginning at the end of the fifth line and continuing across the sixth. Incidentally, the artist here signs THEKE PHAIDIMOS SOPHOS – *Skilful Phaidimos set [the stele] up* (that is, over the *sēma*) – while Eukosmides, who commissioned the monument, is said to have *built it fair* (EPOIESEN KALON). That is, the usual terminology is reversed – *epoiesen* referring to the dedicant and *theke* to the artist. We have noted other instances where *epoiesen* seems to mean “caused to be made” or “caused to be set up” rather than “made with his own hands;” cf. Fig. 23 here.
  54. Lampito base (EM 10643): CEG 66; Kissas 2000, 66 (A 36); Viviers 1992, 84–90; Peikon base: Raubitschek 1949, 139–141 (no. 131); cf. Keesling 2003, 193–194.
  55. Keesling 2003b, 42.
  56. EM 6250. Kissas 2000, 100–101 (B 23); Raubitschek 1949, 86–87 (no. 81).
  57. Kyrieleis 2011, 126–127; Pausanias 6.6.4–6.
  58. Kerameikos I 389. CEG 50; Kissas 2000, 55–56 (A 21); Ridgway 1993, 438 n. 10.16; Viviers 1992, 125–129.
  59. Kalamis base: Raubitschek 1949, 152–153 (no. 136); Keesling 2003, 27, 139; Marcadé 1953, I.40; Pausanias 1.23.1–2. Epikharios base: Raubitschek 1949, 124–125 (no. 120); cf. Pausanias 1.23.11. Hegelokhos base: Raubitschek 1949, 126–129 (no. 121); Aristas and Ophsios base: Raubitschek 1949, 177–178 (no. 160).
  60. CEG 52. Viviers 2006, 146, and 1992, 103–114; Kissas 2000, 61–62 (A 28); the one word inscription [LEAN]AKTOS (*of Leanax*) appears on the left side of the base. It is rare for a signature to be larger than the associated text (epitaph or dedication). Another Archaic instance is found on the funerary monument of a Karian (Tyr . . .) signed by Aristokles (Kerameikos I 190; Kissas 2000, 70–71 [A 41]; Viviers 1992, 116–124), and one wonders whether it is a coincidence that both monuments marked the graves of non-Athenians. But other examples are known on dedications from the Acropolis – for example, Mikythe’s dedication, signed by Euphron; see Keesling 2003b, 43; Raubitschek 1949, 321–322 (no. 298).
  61. Kissas 2000, 71–73 (A 42); Keesling 1999; Viviers 1992, 67–77. Both inscriptions were thoroughly vandalized, with each letter erased with precision by a chisel. The metrical epitaph (CEG no. 42) was written horizontally in five lines to the right of a painted seated figure (also obliterated but possibly Hades) and Endoios’ signature was written vertically and retrograde to its left.
  62. Kissas 2000, 84–86 (B 6); Raubitschek 1949, 68–69 (no. 65). Keesling 2003b, 43, lists 13 other bases from the Acropolis on which dedication and signature are separated by empty space, including others by Gorgias (e.g. Raubitschek 1949, 82–83 [no. 77]).
  63. Nearkhos may be identified here not as a potter (*ho kerameus*) but as a demesman from Akharnai [*ho Akharneus*], Melite [*ho Meliteus*], or Pallene [*ho Paleneus*]; all these demotics fit the space. See Franssen 2011, 226–229; Keesling 2003, 58–59 and n. 82.
  64. Kissas 2000, 116–117 (B 45); Raubitschek 1949, 232–233 (no. 197). Keesling 2003b, 43, lists nine other examples from the Acropolis where the letters of the signature are smaller than those of the dedication.
  65. Kissas 2000, 105–106 (B 31); Raubitschek 1949, 101–102 (no. 94).
  66. Raubitschek 1949, 321–322 (no. 298).
  67. CEG 280; IG I<sup>3</sup> 885. Raubitschek 1949, 144–146 (no. 133).
  68. IG I<sup>3</sup> 883. Raubitschek 1949, 141–144 (no. 132). Keesling 2004, lowers the date of Kresilas’ career to the 430s and after, placing the Hermolykos base c. 410–400.
  69. Raubitschek 1949, 185–188 (no. 166). The signature line begins eight letters to the right of the beginning of the dedicatory line above and extends three letters beyond its end.
  70. We might note here that on the base of the huge and roughly contemporary bronze Trojan



Horse dedicated on the Acropolis by Khairedemos, son of Euangelos (c. 420 BCE), the sculptor Strongylion's signature is shifted even more markedly to the right of the dedicatory line above and is written on a smaller scale, too; see Raubitschek 1949, 208–209 (no. 176); Loewy 1885, 44 (no. 52).

71. *Contra* Tanner 1999, 161.
  72. Athens, National Museum 1733; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3130. See Kaltsas 2002, 254 (no. 530) and Ridgway 1997, 250 and 274 (n. 41).
  73. Dillon and Baltes 2013, 235.
  74. Ridgway 1997, 286–289; Moreno 1995, 48–49 (Pelopidas base); 57–58 (Corinth base); 81 (Pharsalos base). Lysippos' signature is not repeated in the inscription below the Agias from the Daochos Group in Delphi, which is often thought to be a virtually contemporary marble copy of the bronze original in Pharsalos.
- Another Lysippan signature is said to have come to light in early *trecento* Siena. In his *Commentaries* Lorenzo Ghiberti records the discovery of an ancient statue (possibly a nude Aphrodite with a dolphin) whose quality amazed the city's artists and intelligentsia; it occasioned a festival and with great pomp was installed on a fountain at the center of the city. Written on the base of the statue, Ghiberti says (though he saw only Ambrogio Lorenzetti's drawing of it, not the statue itself), was the name of that “most excellent master,” Lysippos. The statue – an indecent pagan idol at the heart of a Christian city – soon brought Siena bad luck in war (or so it was thought) and was smashed to bits. Its pieces, the bearers of misfortune, were then secretly reburied in the territory of Florence, Siena's archenemy. The story seems too good to be true, but a document of November 7, 1357, confirms it; see Gilbert 1995, 139–141. Cf. Stewart 1990, 290, who considers the attribution of the statue to Lysippos dubious.
75. Thebes, Archaeological Museum 21393. See Ducrey and Calame 2006, who date the monument early in Lysippos' career, c. 370–360 BCE.
  76. Geagan 2011, 282 (H550, H548).
  77. Plutarch, *Perikles* 13.9. The Athena Parthenos is so well known from literary descriptions and later copies and representations that, if there were inscriptions anywhere upon it, we would surely know.

It is odd that signatures seem to have been rarely found on cult statues themselves,

given the great expense these images usually demanded and the prestige they conferred. It was, perhaps, regarded as improper, even impious, for a mortal artist to claim credit for a statue in which a god or goddess was thought to be immanent. At all events, the absence of signatures on cult statues often led later to confusion and competing attributions: the Nemesis at Rhamnous, for example, is sometimes said to be the work of Pheidias (cf. Pausanias 1.33.3), sometimes the work of his student Agorakritos (cf. Pliny *NH* 36.17). Zenobios 5.82 says the statue was made by Pheidias, but that Agorakritos was allowed (because of his supposed intimacy with Pheidias) to hang a sign on the goddess's hand with “Agorakritos of Paros made [me]” on it. See Stewart 1990, 269–270.

78. Pausanias 5.10.2. The cup has PHEIDIOU EIMI (*I am Pheidias*) scratched into its underside; Kyrieleis 2011, 49. Pheidias was evidently the sort of person who needed to claim the ownership of a plain cup as well as the authorship of a majestic statue. That Pheidias (and his students) typically signed their sculptures is, in any case, implicit in Pliny (*NH* 36.17), who records that Pheidias was so enamored of his pupil Agorakritos that he “allowed Agorakritos's name to be put on a number of his own works” (see n. 77 here). Pliny (*NH* 35.54) also tells us the name of one of Pheidias' assistants at Olympia: Kolotes.
79. The tale that Pheidias impiously inserted a self-portrait – a kind of signature – in the Amazonomachy on the shield of the Athena Parthenos (along with a portrait of Perikles) is apocryphal; see Hurwit 1999, 187 and 312.
80. For the “dialogue” between the Parthenon and the Temple of Zeus, see Hurwit 2005.
81. Pausanias 2.27.2.
82. Pausanias 1.2.4; Pasquier and Martinez 2007, 35 (no. 13). Corso 2004, 231–232, suggests the inscription was a Roman recreation, required after the original base was damaged or lost, perhaps during Sulla's sack of Athens in 86 BCE.
83. The foxing of a sculptor's name occurs, so far as I know, only one other time in Archaic art: on the right vertical edge of the Potter's Relief from the Acropolis [Fig. 50], where the name Endoios is sometimes restored; Ridgway 1993, 420, 441 (n. 10.27); Boardman 1991, 82 and fig. 137.
84. Cf. the near-concealment of names on some Syracusan coins, such as Pl. VI and Fig. 19.



85. On the signature, see Viviers 2006, 148 (n. 39) and pl. I, 3, and 1992, 96–98; Brinkmann 1994, 74–75 and figs. 115–116; Ridgway 1993, 394–395, 413 (n. 9.38), 426; Guarducci 1965; Jeffery 1976, 185.
86. Touloupa 1986, 144, favors EPOIESE; also, Hurwit 1990, 183; Ridgway 1993, 443 (n. 10.35).
87. Olympia attributions: Pausanias 5.10.8; Pheidias and Menon: Plutarch, Perikles, 13, 31.2–3; Erechtheion sculptors (as well as painters, contractors, workmen, and architects): *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 474 and 475 (Pollitt 1990, 191–193).
88. Pliny *NH* 36.30–31; Vitruvius 7.praef.13.
89. Jeppesen 2002, 148–154; Ridgway 1999, 69 n. 45, 77; 1997, 121, 123–124. It has also been suggested that the Chariot frieze was placed inside the burial chamber itself (and so out of normal view).
90. On the Tomb of Hieronymos of Tlos, on Rhodes, DAMATRIOS EPOIESE was inscribed along an edge of a relief, and the Altar of Apollo Karneios at Knidos (c. 150 BCE), with reliefs depicting the god and nymphs in a pictorial landscape, was signed by Zenodotos of Knidos and Theon of Antioch (twice); Ridgway 2000, 88–89, 123.
91. Queyrel 2005, 109–111; Ridgway 2000, 32–34; Smith 1991, 159–160; Pollitt 1986, 109–110.
92. Ridgway 1993, 424. The kore base signed by both Philergos (who actually made the statue) and Endoios (in whose shop Philergos evidently worked) [Fig. 68] may be the exception that proves the rule (Ridgway disagrees).
93. Ridgway 1993, 424, 428; Boardman 1991, 74.
94. Cf. Viviers 2006, 147.
95. There are now at least two signed late Archaic grave stelai from Boiotia: Alxenor's [Figs. 65, 66] and Mnasiatheios's, signed by Philourgos (Philergos), who was apparently based in Athens; see Andreiomenou 2000 and 2006.
96. Osborne 2010, 246.
97. Ridgway 1997, 165–166, 239; 1993, 431. Since we know the Athenian evidence best, the data may give a distorted view; but see Ridgway 1993, 430.
98. See Dillon and Baltes 2013; Geagan 2011, 272–284 (mostly 4th century and later); Keesling 2007, esp. 155–156, who notes signed Acropolis portraits by such sculptors as Demetrios of Alopeke, Nikomachos, Leokhares, Kephisodotos, Timarkhos, Sthenis, and others from the 4th and early 3rd century. On the other hand, not one of the nearly one hundred Hellenistic inscribed statue bases from Kos bears a sculptor's signature; Ridgway 2000, 165. Even so, Ridgway also notes (168, 230) that in general the practice of signing sculptures seems to have increased in the 2nd century.
99. See Siebert 1978, 129, who links the increase in the number of signatures to “the desacralization of images [which] would have led sculptors and painters to make their techniques recognized and make known their names.”
100. Howland 1958, 3–4; Higgins 1967, li, 113–119.
101. Cf. Vollkommer 2014, 114; Stewart 1990, 23.
102. Ridgway 1993, 424–425; Boardman 1991, 75; Immerwahr 1990, 28, nos. 105 and 110; Raubitschek 1949, 59–60 (no. 58, Euthykles base).
103. There are, as usual, exceptions. On a few column bases from the Acropolis (where the inscriptions are written vertically in the flutes) the signature is to the right of, and therefore “above,” the dedication [cf. Fig. 69], and on several pillar monuments the sculptor's signature is above the dedication (both inscribed horizontally); see Raubitschek 1949, 12–13 (no. 7), 15–16 (no. 10), 273–274 (no. 237), 297–299 (no. 278), 310–313 (no. 291).
104. Viviers 2006, esp. 150–154; cf. Dillon and Baltes 2013, 235–236.
105. Euphron: Raubitschek 1949, 321–322 (no. 298).
106. It is worth repeating that in the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods – the era of the centimeter-high signature – some Late Classical and Hellenistic sculptors (Praxiteles, Kephisodotos, Damophon, Telesinos, Eukheir and Euboulides, for example) attained substantial wealth and enjoyed high, nearly aristocratic, social status and civic respect; see Chapter One here.

## CHAPTER 11

1. After discussing the case of the Roman playwright and epic poet Ennius (239–169 BCE), who is said to have composed his own epitaph proclaiming his literary immortality, Cicero asks “But why stop at the poets? Artists wish to become famous after death. Why else did Phidias insert his own likeness on the shield of Minerva in spite of having no right to do so?

What of our philosophers? Do they not inscribe their names upon the actual books they write about contempt of fame?” (*Tusculanae Disputationes* 1.15.34, trans. J. E. King). We might compare, for example, what Lucian has to say about Sostratos: by signing the Lighthouse at Alexandria he “kept his eyes on eternity,” Chapter 5 here.

2. Cf. Osborne 2010, 236: “not only have signatures come to be associated with claims to originality, but there is good reason to think that signatures already conveyed such claims in antiquity.” But for Mackay 2010, 5, *epoiese* signatures cannot be read as “assertions of personal inventiveness,” and for Ridgway 2000, 56 n. 44, “personal signatures in our sense of the word probably did not exist in antiquity.” While only a few *epoiese* or *egraphise* signatures explicitly claim originality, all, it seems to me, claim credit for production, and when, say, a sculptor like Geneleos writes his name directly and prominently on a statue he made [Fig. 59] or a painter like Polygnotos signs a wall painting with an epigram, that strikes me exactly as a personal signature in our sense of the term. For pride or self-satisfaction as a major generator of signatures, see also Vollkommer 2014, 111–112, 117–119.
3. Louvre F 54; see Immerwahr 1990, 36 (no. 147) and Chapter 8 here.
4. CEG 291; Bowie 2010, 327. For Aristotle’s definition of *sophia* in art, see *Ethics* 6.7.1–2 (1141a9–13).
5. CEG 348; Bowie 2010, 327 (his trans.). As in the case of the signature of Euthykartides [Fig. 1], the act of dedication is given priority over the act of creation.
6. Ridgway 1993, 151, 177 (n. 4.75); Boardman 1991b, 71–72, fig. 103; Stewart 1990, 68; Burford 1972, 208.
7. Pliny, *NH* 36.11–12. According to Pliny, Arkhermos was the son of Mikkiades and grandson of Melas, and so Boupalos and Athenis would belong to the fourth generation of a Chian sculptural dynasty. But it is likely his source misunderstood the Delian inscription, where Mikkiades appears to be the dedicator of the Nike and Melas an ancestral hero of Chios; Kaltsas 2002, 55 (no. 59); Boardman 1991b, 71–72.
8. CEG 26, 18; Kaltsas 2002, 58 (no. 81); Richter 1961, 157–158 (fig. 200 and no. 35).
9. Pausanias 5.25.8; Stewart 1990, 253.
10. CEG 387; see Bowie 2010, 326–327, for this and other signatures emphasizing the skill of the artist.
11. Wittkower 1963, 2.
12. For signatures in the Italian Renaissance, see Goffen 2001 and 2003. It is worth noting such special cases as the *Annunciation* in the Duomo of Volterra, dated to 1497 and usually attributed to Mariotto Albertinelli: it is signed, in charcoal on the back, *Bartolommeo me fece – Angelo*, which seems to mean that the angel Gabriel is giving credit to Fra Bartolommeo for painting him in a signature that, once the painting was in place, would be out of sight; Borgo 1976, 71–73. Despite such cases as Baccio Bandinelli, who signed most of his works, and Titian, who signed some 80 of his, the number of Renaissance signatures declines in the Cinquecento.

At all events, the Latin signature on the *Pietà* in St. Peter’s – MICHAEL. A[N]GELUS. BONAROTUS. FLOREN[TINUS] FACIEBA[T] (*Michelangelo Buonarroti the Florentine made [this]*) – is boldly cut into the otherwise functionless band that crosses Mary’s breasts, and it follows the ancient formula, in the imperfect tense, commended by Pliny in his *Natural History* (*Praefatio* 26): technically, it means not Michelangelo “made [this]” but “was making [this],” as if the act of creation were a continuous process that never reaches an ending or perfection.

It may be that Michelangelo believed that signing his religious works would have been irreverent or impious (just as Byzantine icon-painters “recoiled from such an earthly intrusion in a sacred field;” Goffen 2001, 309). But he did not sign his pagan works, either (*Bacchus*, for example, or his relief of the *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs*), and so it appears that, once the relatively early *Pietà* had declared his identity and ability, he (like Leonardo) simply believed that further signing was, for him, unnecessary or indecorous. But according to that famous anecdote found in Vasari’s revised edition of his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1568), it was when he happened to overhear visitors from Lombardy claiming the as yet unsigned *Pietà* was made by their “Hunchback of Milan” (that is, Cristoforo Solari) that he was motivated to sign that one work. Angered that another artist got credit for his statue, he snuck into St. Peter’s that night and flagrantly chiseled his signature along the

- Virgin's sash to claim the work not only for himself, but also for Florence. This story does not, however, appear in the first edition of the *Lives* (1550) and is almost certainly apocryphal; see Wang 2004, Goffen 2001, 321–326, and Hughes 1997, 57–58. The signature, at any rate, is written (in neat but shallow and unevenly spaced Roman block letters) as if it disappears beneath Mary's veil: FACIEBAT's final "t" was never cut – the word is incomplete, which, like its imperfect tense, may reflect the contingent nature of the artistic process. All this uncannily recalls the coyness with which some gem-carvers and die-cutters (especially Sicilian ones) signed their often incomplete names; cf. Figs. 16, 19. There is also, as Pliny knew (*NH* 35.145), a certain pleasure and poignancy in the incomplete or the unfinished (it allows us to see the original design and conception of the artist and evokes sorrow for the hand that never completed it), a sentiment to which the oeuvre of Michelangelo (who probably knew Pliny well) famously testifies; cf. Hibbard 1998, 193.
13. Cf. Siebert 1978, 113, who argues that the appearance of signatures "est très naturelle dans les siècles et dans pays où s'affirment l'individu."
  14. Cf. Ridgway 1993, 429: "It is difficult to escape the thought that artists signed as a form of advertisement, to prompt further commissions." Bolmarcich and Muskett (forthcoming) find entrepreneurship the principal motivation for the signing of Attic vases. We might note here that the stamped handles of Classical and Hellenistic transport amphoras often include not only the name or symbol of the place of origin (such as the beaming head of the sun-god Helios for Rhodes) but also the name of the licensed manufacturer – a brand name, such as AGORANAKTOS (*from Agoranax's shop*) – and sometimes even the date of production (such as "in the term of Sostratos" and "in the month of Artamitios").
- Another Hellenistic instance of branding occurs on a recently published relief oinochoe representing the myth of Aktaion, probably a mid-2nd century Macedonian product. Labels (such as *Aktaion observes Artemis bathing*) identify the several mold-made scenes applied to the surface, and the word DAMA[CI]PPOU indicates the vase comes [*from the workshop*] of *Damasippos*; see Zarkadas 2014.
15. But one wonders if the relatively small size of the typical Greek city-state often made signing unnecessary. It has been estimated that at any one time in Archaic or Classical Athens there were no more than a few hundred potters and painters (and their assistants) at work in the industry (see Boardman 2001, 142–143), and that means the identities of at least the more successful, "better" artists would have been well known in the city without signatures. The fact that Nikosthenes' many signatures were apparently driven by the *export* market supports the supposition.
  16. Lysippos: Pliny, *NH* 34.37, 62; Hephaistion and Eutykhides: Dillon and Baltes 2013, 236. The Lysippan total is more credible if we assume that many of the 1500 bronzes were cast – mass produced? – from the same molds.
  17. Pliny *NH* 36.17, and Chapter Ten here, n. 78.
  18. Cf. Cook 1997, 245.
  19. Pliny, *NH* 35.84, 132; Plutarch *Moralia* 1093D–E.
  20. *Theogony* 22–25.
  21. *Works and Days*, 654–657.
  22. Theognis, I.19–23.
  23. Pliny, *NH* 35.79; Galen, *de Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 5.
  24. According to Cicero, *Brutus* 86.296, Lysippos ironically claimed that the Doryphoros of Polykleitos was his *magister*; Robertson 1975, 464, must be right that Lysippos meant that the Doryphoros taught him what *not* to do. The anxiety of influence is also apparent in Lysippos' famous statement that earlier sculptors "represented men as they were, but he represented them as they appeared to be;" see Pliny, *NH* 34.65. This is as explicit a claim of originality and difference as there is from Greek antiquity: Lysippos clearly saw himself (and his achievements) in relation to artists of the past, and so possessed an art historical sensibility.
  25. We do not know whether Antenor's originals (themselves revolutionary in that they were "civic and secular," not votive or funerary) were two kouroi set side by side or figures in action: Pausanias' description of them as *arkhaioi* (1.8.5) might refer to details of anatomy or hairstyle rather than pose. Matusch 1996, 58–62, argues that the two groups – one late Archaic and the other Early Classical – were in fact compositionally similar, that Kritios and Nesiotes consciously replicated

Antenor's group (which would have thus consisted of figures in action) for ideological reasons: "the more alike the two groups were, the more rapidly the message would be transmitted: equilibrium had returned to Athens [after the Persian destruction], and the city was again under the protection of the Tyrant Slayers" (62). If she is correct, Kritios and Nesiotes effaced their own artistic individuality for the sake of the *polis*. But Stewart 2008, 70–75, and others regard the second group as a radical departure from traditional formulae, implying that Antenor's group was in fact a pair of *kouroi* and that Kritios's and Nesiotes' was a truly revolutionary action group; cf. Neer 2010, 78–85. If so, Kritios and Nesiotes must have felt the anxiety of Antenor's influence – presumably the older sculptor was no longer around, or he would have been asked to recreate his own stolen statues – as they established their difference and generated their own artistic identity. Their statues would essentially have been a critique of the Archaic ones, and in that critique they effectively inaugurated the Early Classical style.

26. The Greeks, it is often said, first developed a sense of history itself, a sense that it is possible and desirable to record human events and achievements over time. Is it coincidental that the signature, which is a kind of historical record, flourishes among them, too – at least compared to the other peoples of antiquity?
27. Pollitt 1990, 3, 6. A certain Artemon wrote a book entitled *About Painters*, but we know nothing else about him or his date; see Harpokration, *Lexicon*, s.v. *Polygnotos*.
28. *Works and Days*, 25–26. The usual translation of the line misses the intensity of the verb *KOTEEI* (*is angry with*). The adage is repeated in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 8.1.6, and there are many inscriptions in which craftsmen of various kinds confirm its truth, boasting of their competitive advantage. For example, the Attic miner Atotas – a *banaios* if there ever was one – claims in his epitaph that "No one rivaled me in skill (*tekhnē*);" see Burford 1972, 177, 209.
29. Pliny, *NH* 35.58.
30. Pliny, *NH* 34.53.
31. Pliny, *NH* 36.17.
32. Pliny, *NH* 35.65, 72.
33. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 2.13.12–13.
34. Arnold-Biucchi 2013, 183; Rutter 2012, 78–79; and Chapter Four here.
35. *ID* 1703 (Boethos and Theodosios); *ID* 1643 (Hephaisteion). Dillon and Baltes 2013, 237. On both bases the signatures of the artists are smaller than, and located considerably below, the main texts – common Hellenistic practice.
36. See Chapter 8 here.
37. Lucian, *Zeuxis or Antiochos* 3, records how Zeuxis "always tried to do something new" in his paintings but was upset when the originality of his subject-matter drew more attention than "the precision of his workmanship."
38. See D'Angour 2011, 153–155. Nearly 150 years ago, in his posthumously published essay *Homer's Contest*, F. Nietzsche found competition at the root of Greek culture: "Every great Hellene hands on the torch of the contest" and "when we remove the contest from Greek life we immediately look into [the] pre-Homeric abyss;" Kaufmann 1976, 36, 38. In this Nietzsche appears to have followed Jacob Burckhardt, whose lectures he attended as a young professor in Basel. In his *The Greeks and Greek Civilization* (a collection of lectures published after his death in 1897), Burckhardt not only calls the period from the (supposed) Dorian migration to the end of the 6th century "the agonal age" but also considers the *agōn* the driving force of Greek civilization, "a motive power known to no other people;" see Burckhardt 1998, 160–184.

One more literary *agōn* needs mentioning: according to a story told in the *Vita Aeschyli* (Life of Aeschylus), the poet left Athens for Sicily in a huff after losing what seems to have been a public competition to choose a funerary epigram commemorating those who fell at Marathon. The winner was Simonides.

## GLOSSARY

1. Cf. Goffen 2001, 309, 311.

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## INDEX OF ARTISTS AND SIGNATURES

(b): builder or architect  
(c): ceramicist (potter or vase-painter)  
(d): die-engraver  
(g): gem or seal engraver  
(m): metalsmith

(mo): mosaicist  
(p): painter (wall- or panel-painter)  
(s): sculptor  
(tc): coroplast (worker in terracotta)  
(w): weaver, textile artist

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